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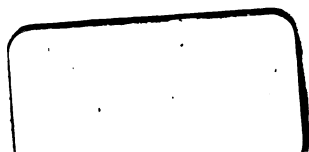
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CHRIST
THE DIVINE MAN,
OR
DUTY VULGAR





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CHRIST THE DIVINE MAN,
OR
DEITY VEILED.

BY

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AND

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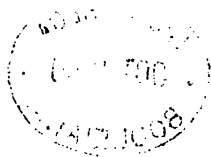
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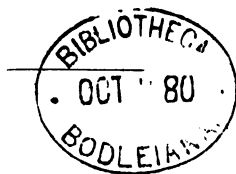
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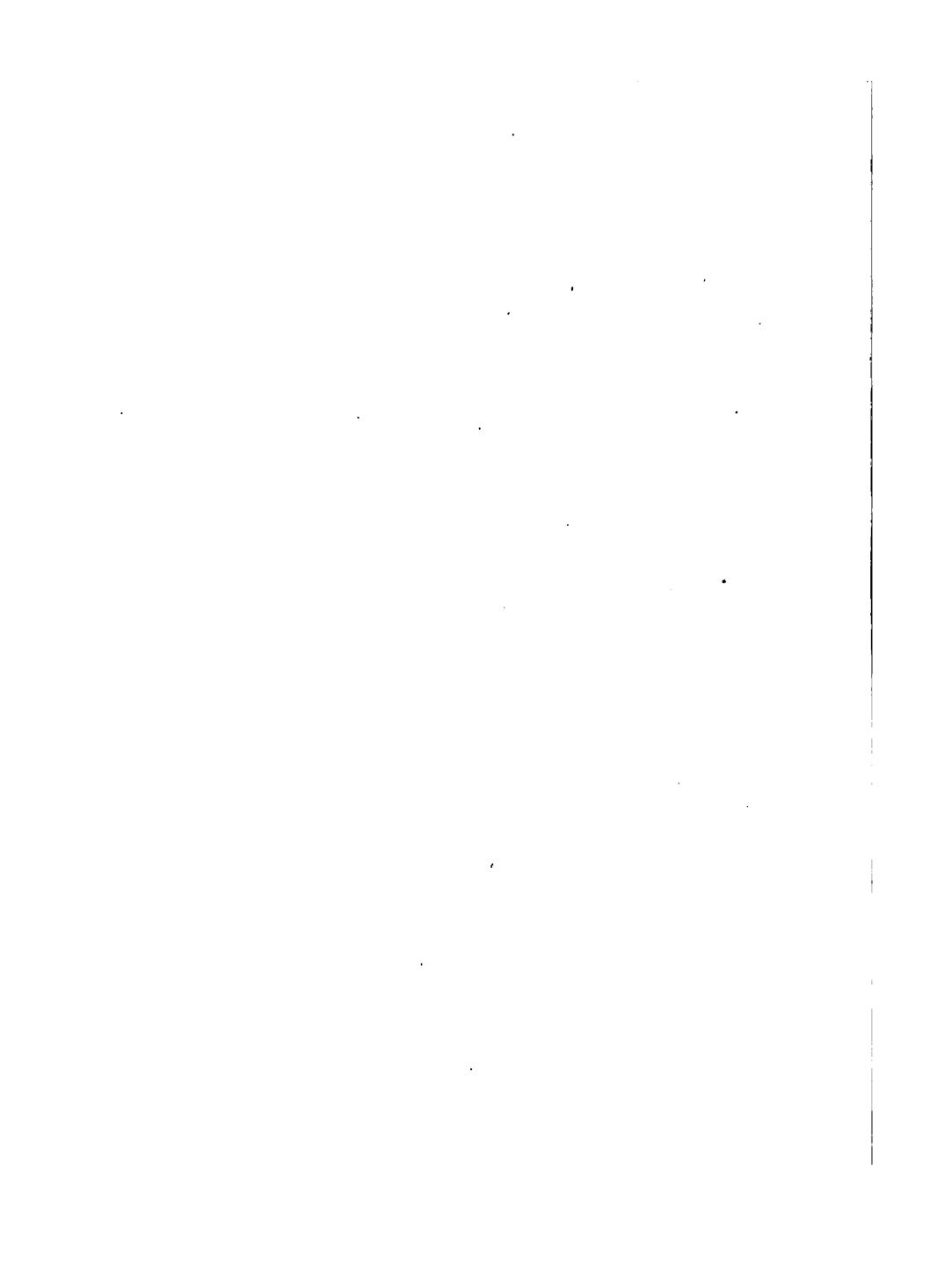
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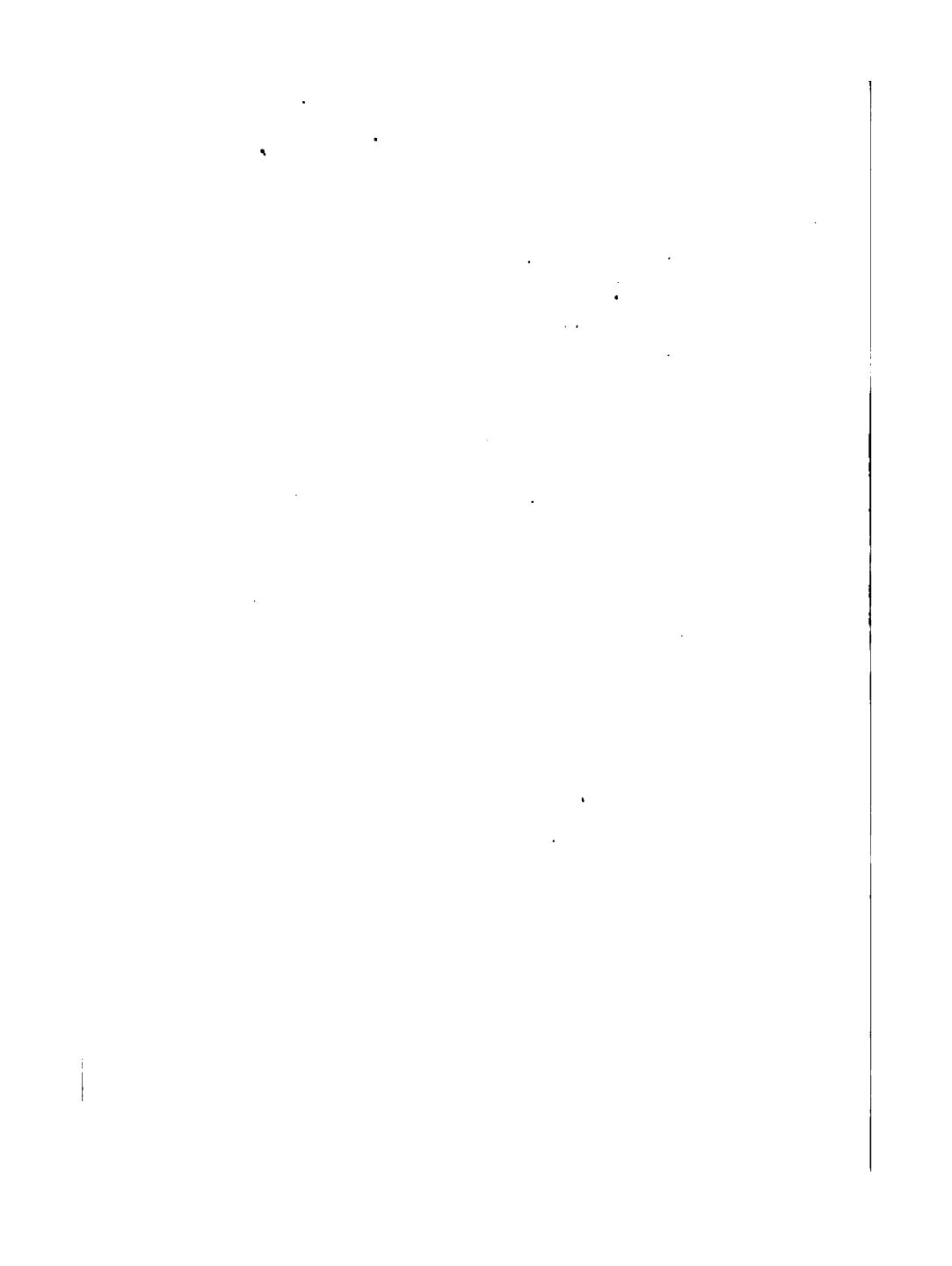
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P R E F A C E .

THIS little volume is not offered to its readers as a narrative of the Life of Christ, but as an attempt to show in a simple and popular way, and largely from that Life, His right to the claim of Deity ; and this it does, not by any reference to particular passages of Scripture, but by the application to the subject of the general principles and established facts of Christianity. The Deity of Christ is a subject in itself so grand, and one which has been so often and so ably treated, that any writer may well shrink from giving to the public another work, however unpretentious, on the same theme. The Author rejoices to be numbered at all amongst the advocates of Christ, and wishing that his readers may find half the pleasure in reading this little book which he has had in writing it, he leaves it in the hands of Him, Whom it is intended to honor, and to Whom he reverently dedicates it.

LONDON,
July, 1880.



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CHRIST THE DIVINE MAN,

OR

DEITY VEILED.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.



SOME people exalt the Bible, others Sacraments, others Creeds and Ordinances, some make everything of Morality, others of Worship, others of Church government; all of which are important, but foremost and above all is Christ. Science furnishes interesting discoveries and discloses wonders which, with our imperfect knowledge, *seem* opposed to Revelation, the antiquity of Tradition has a wide and ever-accumulating influence, religious Speculation affords an infinity of theories; nice distinctions, verbal quibbles, learned discussions about doctrines, and customs, and manuscripts, have a mighty magnetic

power over multitudes of minds; but the centre and glory of all truth is CHRIST.

The truth of the Gospels is not mere abstract truth, it all centres round one *Person*, and that person is JESUS. It is a mirror in which we see reflected the shifting scenes and changing tableaux of a *life* as it passes before us, all bearing upon the character and doings of one person, and that one person is Jesus.

So that Christianity is not merely a system, a creed, new intellectual progress, or new moral developments; Christianity is CHRIST. It is a *fact*, it is a *Person*—Jesus Christ born, living, toiling, teaching, suffering, crucified, buried, rising, ascending, seated at the Right hand of God. The old religions dealt in myths, not wholly fictitious, but holding vestiges of truth, as the amber preserves fragments of insect and vegetable life, coloured however too deeply by the action of the billows of time and the soil of superstition to be intelligible to the many. Christianity is a fact—Christ is a real God-man. A Hindoo once when first instructed in the knowledge of Christ exclaimed, “Ah!

here is something real, something which we can understand, something with which we can sympathize, our eyes can see it, our ears can hear it, our hands can handle and our hearts can enjoy it.”* Yes, Christianity meets the wants of the soul because it presents to men salvation as *a fact*, and Christ as *a person*, and so while the Gospels do indeed convey to us much of the most momentous truth, and reveal future things hitherto unknown, and contain much that must be called doctrinal and spiritual, yet are they chiefly occupied with the *life* of Jesus. They impress upon us the reality of His existence—His birth, His growth, His character, His daily labours, His sufferings and death. There is an intense reality about it all, nay, in such bold and striking forms and colours do they paint all these things, bringing out often, as it were with a single stroke; a trait or an event in bold relief, that we sometimes seem only to be gazing on some wonderful and beautiful

* Many of the passages quoted by the author are taken from extracts made from time to time, the source of which he has forgotten.

picture, of which Jesus is the most wonderful and beautiful object.

The Jews saw in Him only a carpenter's son, and a prophet from rude Galilee, many to-day see in Him only a man eminent above all men for wisdom and goodness, but we see in Him—God in the person of man—God as man dwelling among men—a Divine man, obeying, working righteousness, suffering, dying, rising to life again. This is the key-stone and the glory of Christianity, remove it and the whole fabric falls. It is not enough that the perfected manhood, the matchless character, the faultless life of Christ command the admiration of all thoughtful men, that they reverence Him as having realized in His life that ideal purity and goodness which even philosophers such as Socrates had deemed the unattainable goal of man's aspirations after virtue; the Christ of the Gospels demands more than this, His Divine nature claims our adoration, His fulness is the fulness of Deity, Begotten of the Father on the one hand "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person," but on the other hand

“Jesus,” the Saviour of men, knocking, as He is so familiarly pictured in the well-known work of Holman Hunt, at the door of every man’s heart, and seeking admittance as “the Light of the world.”

But His is no borrowed, no reflected Light, He is the very Sun itself, the centre of the system of our spiritual firmament, its attractive force, its regulating power, and its essential and unfailing source of Light. The sun is the source of our atmospheric light; even the artificial light which we use in our houses and streets is brought out, we are told, from the treasure-houses of the sun, light laid by in store for use ages before it was needed; the earth borrows its beauty, the sky its blueness, the clouds their fleecy or golden or carmine loveliness, the flowers their colour and scent, winged insects their bright hues, the sturdy oak its strength, and, it is said, the diamond its lustre, and all living things their life from this source of Light—the Sun. Even so Christ is the very source of the world’s truest, purest, brightest Light; “a Sun in which there are no spots,” rising over the

darkness and dissipating it, revealing the Great Father and, in the knowledge which that revelation affords, imparting mental, moral, and spiritual Light and Life. Our very thought and literature, our liberty and civilization, are but the offspring of the rays of this Divine Sun, and the nations walk in the light thereof, regardless of its source; whence creeds derive all their worth, worship its acceptance, gifts their value, deeds their merit, churches their power, efforts their success.

Now it is the Sun itself that gives us light, not any theory about its composition or weight, not our knowledge of its dimensions or distance from the earth; an acquaintance with the solar system, a knowledge of how the moon and other planets benefit by the sun's effulgence, neither gives us light, nor will add to the light we already possess. So it is not any theory of Christ's pre-existence or twofold nature or atonement, not our knowledge of Bible truth concerning Him, not our admission of His Deity, nor our recognition of Him as the Head of His Church, nor our acknowledgment of the blessings which those who live in His light

enjoy, these will not give us light. The Light is Christ Himself. Churches, and creeds, and human teachers, are but as planets, with their attendant moons, Christ is the Light of the world, and the soul's Sun.

This then is our exalted conception of Christ. He shone on the primeval world when all was chaos. "He veiled the brightness of His Godhead with a mantle of human flesh," yet so that its glory manifested itself and proclaimed Him as the very source of Divine Light and Life; and when our earthly sun shall have set for ever "in the glowing hues of a world's upheaval, behind the fading hills of Time," Christ the "Son of God" and "Son of Man," "God of God" and "Light of Light," will shine for on ever. So too of all human systems and theories and speculations and creeds, their light at its brightest is but a derived light, and if they pass away it is only that they may be superseded by the very "Light of Light" Himself.

Our little systems have their day :
They have their day and cease to be,
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST THE LAST LINK IN CREATION, OR MAN
BROUGHT INTO UNION WITH GOD.

IN Creation as in Redemption there is embodied a grand idea, the progressive development of which indicates a settled plan, the working out of a definite purpose. We often speak of "carrying out an idea." Such an idea, plan, or purpose would appear from the evidence of Geological research, to have existed in the mind of the Creator from the beginning, and in every successive development, in every new period, He has been working out that plan as it existed in His own mind. This thought is eminently calculated to silence and tranquillize the mind perturbed amid so many complexities, and to serve as a key to many a mystery in science, and many a fact in History and daily life, which otherwise appears causeless and aimless.

This is especially the case with the material world, where everything reveals a leading idea of the Divine mind, in the adaptation of all things to the use and welfare of man, or, if you prefer it, of man to them; the Light for instance to the Eye, the atmosphere to the respiratory organs, the waves of air to the structure of the Ear, yes, and the very physical formation of the globe for the determining of human destiny; for just as the Greeks could never have attained to their civilization on the vast table-lands of Asia, but only in a country surrounded and penetrated by the sea, so Englishmen could never have become what they are to-day except in their own island home. The purposes of God are thus written in the very rivers and mountains and seas, and the circumstances of country and climate, in connection with the history of man, reveal the purpose and plan in the mind of the Creator.

A still more striking evidence is furnished by the earth's strata, and the existing forms of animal life, and the idea embodied in this paper and the line of argument pursued, may be found *in extenso*

in the works of Agassiz, Hugh Miller, Carpenter, and others. As is well known, underlying all the changes and varieties that are to be found in the past or the present, there are *four leading ideas*. You have the starlike form, or bodies radiating from the centre; the articulated form, or bodies composed of rings; what is called the molluscan; and finally that, which (embracing our own) is called the vertebrate, distinguished by its having one cavity for the respiratory and digestive organs, and another for the nervous centres.

Now in every period of His creation the Creator has carried out these four leading ideas. There has been a continual advance, a steady progressive development, but the past and the present are indissolubly linked together, and as though it were written in our mother-tongue, we have, in the geological strata and in the living fauna, the unity of the authorship and the ceaseless working out of a preconceived idea indicated in the plainest manner.

Not only however is there constant development, so that infinite as He is in His resources, the

Creator never repeats Himself, at least in the details of His workings (for as Lyell says, "When the parents of a species have been moulded He breaks the die in which they were cast"), not only is there absolute unity and completeness in the plan, so that to take only one illustration, "almost all animals have a heart, or something which represents it; such an organ exists not merely among all the vertebrated classes, but in the mollusca, and higher articulata;" and there is probably not a single large artery in man, to which a corresponding branch might not be found in the bird, on the other hand, there is perhaps not a single large artery in the bird, to which there is not an analogous branch in man, and Dr. Carpenter points to this as "one example, out of many, of that unity of design, which we see everywhere prevalent throughout nature, manifesting itself in the close conformity of a great number of apparently different structures to one general plan: whilst there is at the same time an almost infinite variety in the details:" but there is also the manifest working out of ulterior purposes; every act of creation is

an onward revelation of the idea in the mind of the Creator—is itself a germ of the whole plan—is a working out of the grand spiritual idea and purpose of the Deity. Revelation helps us to the belief that all material phenomena are in the hands of God for spiritual purposes, and nature herself discloses to us the mind of the Creator looking and working on through material forms and by fixed laws to spiritual ends and results.

Animal life teaches us that the Creator's plan is to work towards the realization of an idea. First of all a rough draft, so to speak, is thrown off; this is repeated and continually improved, being nothing less than the gradual development of the perfect pattern as existing evidently in the Creator's mind. We go back into the life of remote geological periods, and we find there the outline sketches of subsequent or existing forms. You do not for instance get the vertebrate skeleton all at once, it is gradually worked out through unnumbered forms and unmeasured ages, so that you may trace it up from one geological period to another, until at last you have it perfected in man. Those

"days" of creation, in whatever light we view them, whatever the duration we give them, are but the successive stages of a work which results in the formation of man ; as the great Agassiz has said, "Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended from the first appearance of the first Palæozoic fishes ;" and the late Professor Owen says, "The knowledge of such a being as man must have existed before man appeared. The Divine mind planned the archetype"—in other words, the Creator was working all along in accordance with the pattern which He had in His own mind.

Before passing on to consider the relation to the Deity of Christ of what has been advanced, we notice that collateral with it all and bearing upon it, in so far as they reveal a similar working out of an "idea" through ages, are—the history of tabernacle and temple, typical every way of spiritual and heavenly things—the history of the Church, with new revelations, observances, experiences, and hopes, but *always one*, and only developing out of the Patriarchal into the Mosaic, and again into the

Christian, to be yet again developed into the highest ideal—and the history of sacrifices and of Saviours. The final development (for us) of the Creator's idea probably awaits us in that "spiritual body," with which we expect to be clothed, or more correctly speaking, into which this natural body will be developed. We know not what it will be, it doubtless is an ideal also, a pattern in the Divine mind to be realized hereafter, and of which this natural body is a coarse and incomplete type. Then it will be ours to trace out one Divine thought, one plan, running through all the forms geology and nature present, up through the human form as it now exists, right up to that more glorious ideal of the "spiritual body," the body into which Christ Himself "shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."

Now if you have grasped the idea of a progressive development in the animal creation, through the lower to the higher forms, and so on up to man, and to Christ the perfect man, you are prepared to see the necessity and appreciate the fitness of the union of the human with the Divine in Christ for

the completion of the chain Godward. Higher and grander than anything which Geology or existing forms of life can reveal, is that further development of the Divine plan, and that ennobling of animal life which is manifested in Christ the Divine man : man "made of a woman," and at the same time God, "manifest in the flesh." Here we have in Christ the link between the highest form of the animal creation and the Creator Himself. This is the legitimate working out, this the final development of the idea. The mention of it is not new, not original, but itself is none the less grand.

"The Testimony of the Rocks" tells us that "the advent of man simply as such was the great event prefigured during the old Geologic ages; the advent of that Divine man 'who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light' was the great event prefigured during the historic ages. It is these two grand events, equally portions of a sublime scheme, which originated when God took counsel with Himself in the depths of eternity, that bind together the past the present and the future—the Geologic ages with the Patri-

archal and the Mosaic and the Christian ages." This in itself is a sublime conception, but when we consider in its completeness the idea of the Creator, when regarding Christ as the last link in the chain of the animal creation we see in Him its final development into God—the creature in its highest form becoming one with the Creator—we are not more filled with wonder at the grandeur of the plan, than we are constrained to accept with admiration the fitness of the means by which alone it could be accomplished.

Christ is the latest development of the Creator's idea, the last link by which the creation and man at its head is united to the Creator, and man is for ever exalted into glorious and blessed union with God. Thus all creation is ennobled, a key is furnished to a hundred scriptures, and a solution found for much that otherwise is full of difficulty and doubt. Thus geology and history reveal the same purpose. The ages far past prefigure man the highest development of the animal creation, the nearer ages prefigure the Divine man the highest development of the human race ; and past, present,

and future are all linked together in one grand purpose, for there can be no doubt about the completion of the idea of the Creator, or about the perfect pattern to which He has been working in the creation and Redemption of man.

One God, one Law, one Element,
And one far-off Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

Kingdom after kingdom has given way to, or rather has been developed into, its successor ; protoplasm, infusoria, mollusc, fish, reptile, mammal, man, *Christ*, God. And now the kingdoms are complete in Him, beyond whom there can be no further progress, "that God may be all in all." Beyond us is the kingdom, not of glorified man made in the image of God, but of *God Himself in the form of man* ; "Creation and the Creator meet in one point" and in one Person. God in Christ, and Christ Himself a man. Thus the idea is realized, the pattern is perfected, the chain is complete. Out of and among mammals men, out of and among men CHRIST, and in CHRIST—God.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATION FOR CHRIST, OR THE PROVIDENCE OF
THE GOSPEL.

THE question of Providence is so very wide, we can reason about it so often only in the dark, we are so often destitute of sufficient data and utterly ignorant of the facts and bearings which are necessary to form a just conclusion, that before we can in fairness suggest any other direction of the helm of affairs, or attempt to mend the government of the world, we ought to be gifted with the wisdom and knowledge, the beneficence and power of Him who *does* govern it. It is so also with what may be called the Providence of the Gospel. The ways of God in Christianity give rise to thoughts which land us in mystery, and to questions which we cannot answer. But then so do His ways in Nature, and there are as many perplexing paths to be trodden

by the mind in thinking of time and space as in thinking of eternal punishment, or of the DEITY of Christ. There are as many unanswered questions about the stars and the tides and a hundred other things as about any of the difficult doctrines of the Gospel, or the puzzling experiences of our religious life.

It is an argument often urged against the Divine origin of Christianity, and therefore against the Deity of its Founder, that for so many thousands of years the Revelation which was to bring such blessings to mankind was purposely delayed. This objection however lies against every other form of developed good which the world is from time to time receiving, every revelation, every invention, every discovery, which has promoted the intellectual, moral, physical or social happiness of mankind. It is in fact a question of Providence applied to Christianity.

In the preceding chapter we have traced the hand of God through long ages preparing in the slow gradual development of animal life for the ultimate appearance of the Divine man, and,

analogous to this method of the Divine procedure, we find in the history of man himself a gradual preparation extending over thousands of years, resulting at length in the manifestation of Christ. To carry out His purpose in its entirety is the prerogative of Deity, but there is no plummet in the hand of finite man by which he may fathom the counsels of the Infinite. Just however as "from the time of the creation His invisible attributes are perceived by means of His works," so by prophetic nomenclature, sacrificial rites, temple worship, typical men, direct prophecy, the events of History, and the conditions of Society, we perceive the working of a purpose which seeks the fulness of time for its accomplishment.

The genealogies of the Bible are to many utterly meaningless, and yet in some of them every name is a link in the chain of a pedigree which stretches from the second Adam to the first Adam, and gives to Christ a pre-eminence above earth's proudest monarchs, and, when the Son of Man is recognized by the Jewish people as their rightful sovereign, these old genealogies will assume a peculiar value.

To the oldest of these records there attaches a very singular and interesting Jewish notion that it is in every name prophetic of the Christ, and that these names were given in each case as an intentional prediction. It is equally probable that they were given every time with the idea that the promised Deliverer was then born, but it is none the less true that they are a most distinct and complete prediction of Christ.

Now we know that all names have a meaning, and that in ancient times they were given to point out some fact, characteristic, or expectation in connection with the bearer. Take even the names common amongst ourselves. Albert, "all bright;" Charles, "noble spirited;" Herbert, "bright lord;" Robert, "famous in counsel," and so forth. Especially is this true of Scripture names, not a name is there of place or person which has not its own significance, and it will be well in any revision of the Bible that in most cases the meaning of such names should be given in the margin, because it often assists, nay, sometimes is essential to the right understanding of the pas-

sage, and imparts an additional interest to the narrative.

Notice the names referred to in the antediluvian genealogy. Christ is the second *Adam*, the son of God, the federal Head of a Redeemed race; He is *Seth*, "set or placed" in the stead of another, in which, as in a nutshell, lies the one truth which is the hope and salvation of men—the substitution of Christ for the sinner; He is *Enos*, "son of man," not merely a son of God put in the place of men, but partaker of their flesh and blood, and sharer of their experience, in the oneness of His nature and in His sympathy with the human race; He is *Cainan*, "possessor, or purchaser," to which may be given in perfect harmony with the Hebrew usage the more familiar rendering "Redeemer;" He is *Mahalaleel*, "the praise of God," or as some interpret it "the illumination of God," but the ideas meet in Christ, in whom as the Revelation of the Father's love men learn to praise Him as only the Redeemed can; He is *Jered*, "one who descends," not only *Enos* but *Jered*, not only of the earth but "He that cometh down" from

heaven, which is the very title Christ so often gives Himself in the Gospels ; He is *Enoch*, " dedicated or initiated," to which corresponds *Christos*, " the anointed," both of them signifying His separation and consecration to the work of Redemption ; He is *Methuselah*, the renderings given to which are many, but the idea is one, namely that of " death ;" if translated " man of a dart," who does not think of the nails and the spear? if " demanded to death," who does not recall the " Crucify Him," with which the Jews " demanded that he should die?" or if the Hebrew convey the idea of " giving up oneself to die," then we have the voluntary character of Christ's death ; He is *Lamech*, " one made low," " one who is poor and stricken," language which so forcibly recalls that of Isaiah, that we seem to be reading some chapter of prophecy—poor, low, and stricken—it is the very history of Christ's life upon earth ; lastly, He is *Noah*, which tells of " rest," tells of one in whom the race was preserved alive.

And so out of these old names, as honey out of the rock, there issues the sweetness of Christ, His

substitution, His humanity, His Redeeming work — giving glory to God, coming down from heaven, dedicated to the work of Human salvation, demanded for and put to death, after a life of poverty and sorrow, and the rest and consolation of all who put their trust in Him. Surely it is something more than a coincidence which thus portrays Christ in these names which cover the antediluvian era of the world's history, and in the Jewish belief we may well see enshrined the Divine purpose.

A careful study of the subject of sacrifice will lead us to the same conclusion. Passing over its original institution, general application, and world-wide perversion, we turn to the Mosaic dispensation. The religious heart of the world beat in the Jewish nation, which derived its pulsation and vigour from its Divinely appointed sacrifices, and became the seat and source of life for the whole body of nations. The terrible evil of sin, the individual responsibility of the transgressor and his personal insufficiency and desert, the Justice and Holiness of the Deity and His willingness to

save, and the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, were primary truths which these sacrifices taught, and which, through their observance by the one race served more or less to enlighten the conscience of the world, and prepare it for Christianity. *And they all pointed to Christ.* Passover Lamb, morning and evening sacrifice, whole burnt offering of Atonement, scape-goat,—figures all of them of Him who was to come, and involving the ideas of substitution and atonement which reason and common sense teach us could never find their realization in the sacrifices themselves, nor yet even in Christ, if He were not more than a mere man.

Then again there is the Temple; itself a development of the tabernacle, the working out of the pattern which Moses received in the mount, and which David had by the Spirit. Everything in it and about it had a purpose to answer, the dim outline of some heavenly reality, so that down to the very rims of the tables, and the snuffers of the candlestick, the form and the material were specified. The approach to it was arrested at the very first

step by the sight of the great *Altar* : none might draw near without sacrifice. There was but one Altar, and so there is but one Cross, and the very first act of man in approaching God is to lay hold of the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ. Between the Altar and the Temple was the great brazen *laver* : nothing unclean might enter into the presence or service of the Holy One. One laver, one fount of cleansing, one washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Within, on one side, was the seven-branched candlestick, the only *light* there, for there were no windows in the Temple : Christ is the Light of the world, the only true Light, and as the number "seven" signifies the perfection of light, a light that never burns dim, and that never goes out. On the other side was the *shewbread* ; in its double quantity and unfailing supply signifying that Christ, in His Divine and human nature, is the unfailing supply of Life as well as Light to the souls of men. At the entrance into the most Holy place was the *Altar of Incense* : the perfume of the sweet offering passing within the veil. So Christ stands between the

earthly and the heavenly, between men and God, the *one* Mediator who ever liveth to make Intercession. Last of all was the *Mercy-seat*: the "kappereth" or "cover" of the ark, having underneath "the book of the law," and the "manna," and overshadowed with the glory of God. It was the footstool of God, the spot where He met with His people, and on which the blood of propitiation was sprinkled on the day of Atonement. Now Christ is "the propitiation for our sins," in Him God and man are brought near, He is the Bread of Life and the end of the law for righteousness, and is overshadowed with the very glory of God because He is Himself Divine.

Could anything more clearly foreshadow Christ? can we reasonably accept this as nothing more than a remarkable coincidence? Are we not compelled to see in it the working out of an idea—and the evidence of a settled purpose in the Divine mind?

We look through a vista of twenty centuries before Christ came, and down along the ages there occur every now and then men whose biographies

are briefly or lengthily recorded in Scripture as illustrious types of the Christ. Melchizedek, the mysterious Priest King; Joseph, the Saviour and Father of his people; Moses, the Law-giver and Prophet; Joshua, the Captain and Conqueror; David, the Shepherd and King—imperfect yet progressive developments in human life and circumstances of the idea which has its realization in Christ.

And what is prophecy but preparation? It is the development in speech of the idea or purpose that yet awaits its accomplishment. It is the evidence that establishes the Divine mission of the Person in whom it is fulfilled. Even now with all the light and experience of eighteen centuries, what questionings there are among Christians about Christ. What then would it be, or what would it have been at the first, with no prophecies to fall back upon, no predictions which had their fulfilment in Him? The miracles of Christ are justly cited as proof of His mission, but prophecies also are miracles, and if it was an advantage, in the reception of evidence, to see those miracles which

Christ wrought, it is equally an advantage calmly to review the life and miracles of Christ in the light of prophecy.

Take the *character* of Jesus as given in the Gospels, and compare it with the language of the Prophets. If He be not the Person they foretell, then ought Isaiah and his fellows to have lived after rather than before Him, so accurately have they drawn His likeness, a likeness to which no mortal corresponds. Take again the *life* of Jesus as given in the Gospels; follow Him down the street, into the Temple, out of the city gate, across the hills; go with Him from town to town, and village to village, and house to house, and when you have taken down your notes and drawn up an account of what you have heard and seen, compare it with the prophecies of old, and see if you have not a resemblance so close that prophet and historian might almost be one. David and Matthew the Apostle, Isaiah and Luke the Evangelist, Zechariah and John the Divine, all giving us the same biography of one who lived centuries after half his biographers were born.

And then take the *death* of Jesus as given in the Gospels, with all the circumstances leading to and accompanying it. So many are the details and so minute, such as none but an inspired penman or an eye-witness could relate, that we cannot wonder at persons reading in the prophecies and feeling all the time as though they were reading a history written after the event, instead of a series of predictions written before it.

Again, we often talk of the fitness of things, and whoever has had in hand any important project, any scheme to propose, any change to effect, knows the importance of a state of preparation both in persons and things for the proper reception and success of his work. In looking at the facts of History, instead of wondering why the Creator should have delayed so long His revelation in Christ, we should do well to admire how, in His providence, notwithstanding all the wickedness and idolatry of men, He had been preparing the way for the Gospel. It must be remembered that God ever works by means, never wastes power, and never uses extraordinary where ordinary methods

will effect His purposes, so that what men would call the accidents of History, and the circumstancees of the times, were just the very instruments by which He was working out His own plan.

The Jews scattered among all nations carried with them their sacred books of prophecy, and their expectation of the Deliverer communicated itself, as we know from heathen writers, to their Gentile neighbours; the Romans gradually had become the rulers of the world, and a free course was open from end to end of the Empire—the means of transit and communication were comparatively secure—one language, if not spoken, was to some extent known and employed throughout the civilized world, and there was in the Roman Empire a peace so profound that the temple of Janus was again for only the fourth time closed; a variety of circumstances, such as had never before occurred, peculiarly adapted to the spread and reception and establishment of Christianity.

And just as a man fails to receive a truth because his mind is not prepared to admit it, might it not have been so with the mind of the world

unprepared for the latest revelation of Divine truth? But time had been given, idolatry in every form had prevailed, system after system had been propounded, Eastern sages had exercised their imagination, and Grecian philosophers their thought, Roman wisdom and learning had exerted their influence, but the finest intellects and the profoundest researches and the purest systems had failed to produce anything which should satisfy the longing of the soul after reconciliation and fellowship with God, or throw light upon the great questions of Life and Death and the Unseen : and then it was that there appeared the Christ.

In all this we recognize a course of procedure in perfect harmony with the method of the Creator from the beginning, and are only the more inclined to recognize the Divine mission of Him for whose manifestation so careful a preparation had been made, and to give greater heed to the arguments by which His claims to Deity may be established.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OBJECTION ARISING OUT OF THE INCARNATION.



THE Incarnation of the Deity under any circumstances is to very many an impossible idea, and in itself becomes an insuperable difficulty in their acceptance of Christianity, and it is not to be wondered at.

The Pre-existence of Christ, which it necessitates, is a mystery vast and profound ; that God should have had a Son at all, and that this Son should Himself be God, essentially one with and equal to His Father, and yet in some sense subordinate. In His pre-existent state what was the Son's separate existence, what His distinctive office? How far was He or was He not the Creator? Was His existence subsequent to that of the Father, if so how can He be equally God, if not how is He His Son? It is a subject impenetrably shrouded.

The Incarnation further involves the question of

the Divine and human nature in Christ. Who has ever satisfactorily explained it, who will venture to set it at rest? It is easy to say it was God taking human form, but what do you mean by that? Was it only the Son of God dwelling in a body of flesh? If so, then in what sense was He *man*? If the pure Deity occupied the place of the soul, and we cannot of course accept the Gnostic principle that mere matter is the abode of evil, then in what consisted the manhood of Christ? Was it only a Divine mind actuating that form, or a human mind like our own as well? And if so, what relation did the one bear to the other, and how, for instance, could Christ be tempted if He were incapable of sinning, or have power to read the very thoughts of men, and yet be ignorant of the day and hour of His own second coming? These are not merely curious or prying questions, they are the common thoughts of multitudes, and they spring out of the Incarnation of the Deity in Christ.

Revelation teaches that the two natures are preserved. There is no loss of Deity in the Hu-

manity; while the Humanity is none the less true because of the presence of the Deity. There is no change of the nature of God or man, no merging of the one into the other, but a union of the two, the Divine and the Human natures being united so as to form one person, just as soul and body united together form one man.

The Incarnation is often said to be a borrowed idea, and traceable plainly both in Bramanism and Buddhism, and undoubtedly such traces of it are clear in Eastern mythology. But if it is not an idea peculiar to Christianity, and is common to oriental mythology as are the traditions of the Fall and the Deluge, yet is the idea of the Christian Incarnation strikingly in contrast with that of Krishna or Vishnu or of Budh.

In Bramanism we have the *avatars* or "descents" of their Gods. It has been clearly shown however that much of what resembles Christianity both here and in Buddhism is in all probability a corruption of the preaching of the apostles who visited India and the remote East, or of later missionary teachers. What is Krishna but a God

descending, as in the classic legends, in human form, moved with compassion for the people among whom the great serpent "Kali Naga" is spreading destruction and death? Krishna attacks this serpent which envelops him in its folds and finally crushes its head beneath his feet. In the last avatar of Krishna the god is represented indeed as taking the form of an infant instead of an adult, and we meet with the image of "Mother and Child," but it is only the foster-mother.

These avatars are literally "descents," *not* incarnations. They are transformations or assumptions of a human animal or monstrous form for some special object and occur repeatedly. Vishnu has no less than nine, and is to have another. There is a continual *descending* for the purpose of setting mundane things in order, the forms assumed are most ludicrous, and the object, although for the good of men, is comparatively unworthy. Now it is a man-boar to draw up the earth out of the ocean, now a man-tortoise to sustain the globe in convulsions, now a man-lion to interfere between an ungodly father and his pious son.

Compare with this the beautiful and touching story of the Christian Incarnation, how there was an old saying which had come with the wreck of man's happiness out of Paradise, and had found its way into the blessings of Patriarchs and the predictions of Prophets, that of the seed of the woman there should spring up a Deliverer of the race; how to a holy Jewish virgin, not some shadowy creation of the fancy, but whose lineage and home are matters of history, it was revealed that the Spirit of the Creator should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her; how the infant Christ was duly born; all in the most simple natural manner, yet under very special circumstances as befitting the object contemplated, the most important and beneficent the mind can conceive—the Redemption of Mankind.

Buddhism again, of which so much has been made, is a system in which the Incarnation of the Godhead is simply impossible, there being no God to incarnate. Budh is the name for "God," but a Budh is really only a man. There have been several of them. They are men who are supposed

to have appeared at long intervals (the last it is said appeared in the seventh century B.C. and one more is expected), men who, by transmigrations through animal and human forms for long ages, have been so disciplined, as at last to have attained to such a degree of sanctity that they emerge into a state in which they are endowed with supernatural knowledge and power. In this his final state on earth the man is called *Budh* and is worshipped as God, then he is annihilated, and after death his memory is worshipped and his precepts and life serve until the next Budh arrives !

Now what has this to do with Christianity ? Their God is dead, their final hope is annihilation. The system is practical Atheism. Their incarnation is not God descending to take on Him human nature, but man rising into a kind of God, an eminent saint exalted into a demigod.

Buddhism has been called "The Christianity of the East." Does this look like it ? True, there are found the cross and the mitre ; the dalmatica, the cope which the Lama wears in temple services ; double choirs, the censer hung from five chains ;

the blessing given by the Lama with the right hand, celibacy of the clergy, monasticism, saint worship, fasts, processions, litanies, holy water; but it has been ably shown that all these things were probably introduced in the thirteenth century, by that "famous Lama from the remote west" who has been satisfactorily identified with some missionary of the Roman Church.

So much for this kind of argument against the Incarnation of the Son of God. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is moreover inseparable from the idea of Atonement, the two things are necessary parts of one great plan; but nowhere in ancient or modern heathendom will you find anything at all answering to this even where there exists the idea of an Incarnation; the idea of Atonement is wanting, and without this "the doctrine of the Incarnation in a Christian point of view would lose nearly all its force and its significance."

But the idea of an Incarnation in modern heathendom, however derived, whether the natural expression of human hope or the survival of

Christianity early planted, or of a still earlier Revelation, is not antagonistic but helpful to the ultimate reception of that Incarnation which is "God manifest in the flesh." For if it be true that "the cross as a symbol of the Divine has become the sublimest and most sacred object in the universe" it is because the doctrine of the Cross, that is the *Atonement*, rests upon the doctrine of the Incarnation, that is the *Deity* of Christ; and one reason of the failure of so many attempts to estimate and define Christ is the want of a reverent and thoughtful approach to the study of the Incarnation. A writer justly observes, "Christians should ponder and weigh the great fact of the Incarnation and what they believe in it, for ideas of the Incarnation govern all the views of the Christian system. Our whole theology and all church institutes become what the doctrine of the Incarnation is."

The Incarnation and the Atonement stand or fall together, they are but progressive developments of the idea of the Creator from the beginning. Christ is the expression of that idea, and so He is

to us the Word of God, and this also sets forth His pre-existence, for every uttered word has its unuttered original, just as every splendid pile and every beautiful statue and every wonderful picture has its original in the mind of the artist. On this Saint Augustine says, "You look at Christ, He is the word of God 'articulate,' but when you look at Him and say,—Why, Christ was made, Christ began to be—you are not thinking of the Eternal Word, that belongs neither to time nor space."

In this we have another illustration of the argument of the preceding chapter. The Old Testament writings show a gradual personifying of the Word of God. The Chaldee translations frequently use the term to express the agency of God, in so strictly personal a sense indeed that these ancient Jews evidently understood by the term a Divine person. Some writers even say they applied it to the Messiah. Plato had handed down the term as an epithet applied to a Divine person, and Philo originated a philosophy which was a strange compound of his own Jewish ideas with the ideas of the Greek. Out of these elements

there appears to have arisen among the early Christians, both orthodox and heretic, a variety of expressions for Christian truth, and as this religious philosophy, made up by Philo out of Judaism and Platonism, was immediately connected with Ephesus where the Apostle John probably wrote his gospel, we find him rescuing from the danger involved in the use of the terms of a false philosophy, the important truths of the pre-existence and attributes of the Divine word. Neither he nor any other apostle adopted their teaching from these existing philosophies—their teaching is that of the Holy Spirit—but that human philosophy should have thus subserved the doctrine of the Incarnation we must regard as one of those providential preparations in the human mind, which are but developments of the mind and work of God.

The magnitude and glory of the fact of the Incarnation surpass all our power of apprehension. The union of the Divine and human in Christ has relations and consequences which time cannot limit and space cannot bound. It furnishes an outlook

over the ages of man's history, it carries us backward and onward into the mystery of Eternity. We use the word "Incarnation," but the same may be said of it that has been said of another word: "Three letters and one syllable express *God*: but what passed through the mind and through the heart when you said it? When you heard the word '*God*,' could all that be expressed in three letters?" Even so with this wondrous fact expressed in that one word "Incarnation."

The very humiliation accompanying it is one of its mysteries, as unquestionably it is one of the stumbling-blocks by which men are offended. "Nature (says Faber) seemed to let God pass, and made no obeisance when the Eternal was about to become a Nazarene. Rome indeed was all alive, couriers hastening to and fro upon the highways of the Empire, but they conveyed no intelligence of Him. In the palace of the Cæsars, the masters of the world, who suspected the Cæsar in His manger? In the Greek world who suspected this sage in His cave?—the sage who was to convict their philosophy of foolishness and show how the

world 'by wisdom knew not God;' while in Judæa they were expecting another Maccabæus, and we know with what contempt they would have regarded Him, who lying in the bosom of Mary was indeed the King of the Jews."

And yet though His birth was humble and mean in appearance, it was truly royal and Divine. It was ushered in by a long train of prophecy, kings and priests and lawgivers and poets, all conspiring to proclaim the advent and the honors of the babe of Bethlehem. It was looked for and longed for in the hearts of the faithful; a special messenger preceded Him into the world, to become in due time His herald; a new star was hung in the sky to chronicle His birth, and angels came down to sing new songs in honor of it. And why?

Because in Christ we have God Incarnate. It is the Infinite Father manifesting in the Son His pity and yearning for His fallen children. "Unveiling all which was possible of Divine purity, and truth, and beauty, and sweetness, and lovingness, and compassion: descending to the level of His creatures, walking among them, speaking with

them face to face, and appealing to their hearts through the gentleness, the tenderness, the wisdom, the meekness, the patience, the sufferings, the tears, the blood, and the death of Jesus Christ."



CHAPTER V.

THE OBJECTION ARISING OUT OF THE LOWLY
LIFE OF CHRIST.

THE lowly human life of Christ is another difficulty to very many in the acceptance of His Deity. Allowing the possibility and necessity that One who was God should become Incarnate, was it necessary or appropriate that He should assume so humble a garb? Must it be that of a Galilean, nay, of a despised Nazarene? a Nazarene carpenter? And of this fact there can be no doubt; the only question ever raised is whether He was not a blacksmith as well, as we find it in one Hebrew copy of the gospel, and as the famous Syriac version will admit, our "wheelright" in fact, which agrees with what Justin Martyr tells us, that the employment of Jesus was in the construction of ploughs and yokes for the oxen. A carpenter! and the son of a car-

penter! following His father's calling, possibly succeeding him in the business and helping to support His mother; the child of working parents and Himself a son of toil, eating the bread that He earned at the carpenter's bench with the sweat of labor on His brow.

We do not wonder that in this son of an obscure carpenter, this native of rude Galilee, and one of the common people, the rulers and teachers of His nation failed to see the expected Christ, around the idea of whose advent the glowing language of the old Hebrew prophets had gathered a halo of misconceived temporal power and glory. There is a tradition that when Julian, the apostate Emperor, was striving with all the energy of hatred to crush Christianity, one of the despised Christians at Antioch being triumphantly asked what he thought the carpenter's son was doing now,—replied, “The Creator of all things whom thou callest the carpenter's son is making a coffin for Julian,” who is said to have died a few days after. Now at any rate this serves to show us that, as among the Jews, so in the earlier ages of Christianity, the

obscure origin and humble employment of Jesus were offensive to many, and militated against their belief in Him as anything more than a man. And this is the open and secret difficulty of multitudes to-day.

Now first of all this is not exactly fair either on the part of those early Jews, or of the world generally. Many of the Jewish Rabbis and learned men could once boast of no more honourable employment. We find among them shoemakers, blacksmiths, tailors, etc.; moreover it was sufficiently a custom with the Jews that every man should learn his son an honest trade, and the sons of even wealthy and illustrious parents were trained to some manual occupation, while for the repairs of the temple it was deemed necessary that the carpenter should be a priest.

And the world is equally unreasonable now. A writer justly observes, "Peter the Great laid aside his imperial dignity and entered the British service as a ship carpenter that he might learn the art of building a navy. The infidel will praise him and yet sneer at the idea that He who made the worlds

should live so many years in humble life, a poor unknown mechanic. But whose purpose was of the most importance? If Peter might leave his elevated rank, and descend to humble employment, and secure the applause of the world, what honor should be conferred on the Son of God?" It is the purpose that ennobles the act, and consider for what purpose He became a carpenter among men.

In Saint Paul's Cathedral we read on the monument of one of our illustrious dead, "From the throne to the dungeon his name was mentioned with respect, gratitude, and admiration." In the throne room amid the gorgeous costumes and brilliant uniforms and sparkling jewels this man is often the chief attraction, and an emperor stands earnestly conversing with him alone for two hours. And yet in the Lazaretto of Venice you shall find this very man enduring for forty days the miseries privations and perils of fever and imprisonment. Putting himself on board an infected ship, he purposely enters his prison that he may experience and eventually remove the evils of suffering men.

Finally in Cherson on the Black Sea, you shall

see this same man languishing and dying in a virulent fever. Would you know why? Read again from his monument. "He died a victim to the perilous and benevolent attempt to ascertain the cause of and find an efficacious remedy for the plague."

Now for this does Howard sink in the world's estimation? Is he not immeasurably raised? Confined in the fetid dungeon among the dregs of the common people, or stricken with the foul plague dying a cruel death, is he lowered? Is he not ennobled and exalted? Is not his conduct God-like? *Is it not Christ-like?*

A more philosophical form of the difficulty is that which embraces the development of the mind and the perfecting of the character of Christ. And this can only be met by the remembrance that JESUS was essentially a man, and had a human soul. There is no confusion of Godhead and manhood. Christ had a mind like other men, He had therefore mental powers just as He had bodily powers, and just as He could not eat or walk or speak until His body was old and strong enough,

so His human soul could not think or understand at the age of six as it could at twelve, or at twelve as it did at thirty, and as its faculties developed so did they become the receptacles and the instruments of the Divinity which possessed Him.

We do not know for instance how early He became conscious of His mission, how early He realized His own relation to God. At the age of only twelve we find Him equal to a discussion with the most learned of the Jews, and amazing them by the power of His mind and the extent of His knowledge. His reply on that occasion to His mother shows that He already in some degree felt the force both of His mission and of His relationship to the Father, and conveys with it a rebukeful surprise which implies previous proof forgotten by His questioner. There would be a continually increasing consciousness, and while His daily life as a man was surrounding Him with all the ordinary accessions of human experiences, His Divine nature was daily developing within Him all the extraordinary experiences peculiarly His own.

There is however an entirely different view of

the question. A purpose may create a necessity, and just as with Howard and Peter the Great, so it was with Christ. As a prince, a statesman, or a warrior, He would certainly have been as truly man, and Mediator. But to bring Himself within the experience of all He must stoop to the lowest. A perfect man placed on a pedestal for the admiration of all ages is not the Christ of the Gospels, nor the Christ which makes the heart of the world throb at His touch. There are men of high moral principle, just and upright and blameless, men whom we respect and admire, yet lacking the power to sympathize with the mass of their fellows, and such might have been Christ, but now from the depth of His experience springs the power of His sympathy; for sympathy is not knowledge, nor pity, nor kindness, nor help, it is the entering into others' experience, it is fellow-feeling. This, except as man, the Son of God could never have had at all, knowledge He might have had, and pity and power to help, but not sympathy; nor except as a poor and mean man the extent of sympathy which opens to Him all hearts. And we say that the

lower He stooped and the more He suffered for such a purpose as this, the nobler and lovelier is it in Him as man, and the worthier of Him as God.

The human experience of Christ embraces the suffering of temptation. He did not avoid contact with the world, but mingled in its busy crowds, and frowned on none of its innocent enjoyments; He set no example of seclusion, and gave no encouragement to forsake duty, because of mortified pride or disappointed hopes. As in mines often the old unused workings called "goaves" send out the foul and deadly gases they have stored, contaminating and poisoning the atmosphere, floating across every path, occupying every level, penetrating into every corner, and working mischief and dealing death among the miners, so in all their accumulation and variety the evil influences of a corrupt age and of Satanic agency were let loose upon Christ. His, too, was a perfectly human frame, His sensibilities and affections were intensely human, the gates and channels for the entrance of temptation were in all respects the same as our own, and in His ability to be tempted lay His ability to sympathize.

With all his errors, Irving was right when he stood up that night in the Presbytery, at Annan, and said, "I stand here as a witness for the Lord Jesus, to tell men what He did for them, and what He did was this: He took your flesh and made it holy, He came into your battle and trampled under foot Satan, the world and the flesh, yea, all enemies of living men, and He saith to every one 'Be ye holy for I am holy.' Do you say that *that* man was unacquainted with the warrings of the flesh? Dare ye to say that the Lord your Saviour had an easier passage through life than you had?" We dare not. If we attempt to evade the actual temptation we proportionately weaken the sympathy; sympathy not with sin nor with the suffering occasioned by its consciousness, but with temptation (and temptation is not sin), temptation however all the more terrible in proportion to the holiness of the nature and consequent refinement of sensibility.

Taking, then, a comprehensive view of the human experience of Christ, we say that instead of derogating from the glory of His Divine nature

or weakening His claims upon us as God, it exalts both Himself and mankind. Our human nature, our very form has been linked with Deity.

Give human nature reverence, for the sake
Of One who bore it, making it Divine
With the ineffable tenderness of God.

All that is human has been lifted up and ennobled, the helplessness of infancy, the obedience of youth, the growth and development of mind and body—toil, poverty, weariness, the homelessness of the wanderer, the fatigue that seeks a resting-place at mid-day, the tears that fall over the dead, the shop, the sanctuary, the wedding breakfast, the supper table, the home circle, life with all its duties and sicknesses and sufferings, death and the grave, yes, and coldness, and scorn, and reproach, and persecution, and misunderstanding, and solitude, and desertion, all, all are ennobled in the humanity of Christ.

And has Jesus lost anything because of this in the estimation of men? Is it not by these things that He has endeared Himself to mankind? Does the working man think anything less of the

Saviour because He once used the plane, and the saw, and the chisel, the hammer and the nails? It is one of the healthiest signs of the times that effeminate views of life are less and less entertained, and that industry and endurance, and the hard battle of a well fought life are assuming the honor and dignity which are their due. This applies to every aspect of Christ's humanity, and He has laid the foundation of His kingdom among the world's workers and sufferers by Himself becoming a working and a suffering man.

Look at the thing calmly. Here is Jesus, a Jewish peasant, a carpenter of Nazareth, and the son of a carpenter, in circumstances of poverty and contempt, with none of the advantages of rank or wealth or learning, living a life of toil, shame, and suffering, and dying a malefactor's death, and yet, at this moment, eighteen centuries and a half after, so great is His influence in the world, that there is no parallel to Him in the history of our race either before or since. The more we study the Jesus of the Gospels—Himself and His life—even only from a human point of view, the more incompre-

hensible and unaccountable does He appear. Every attempt to make out Christ on mere human principles turns to foolishness, but what is the difficulty of the sceptic is the glory of the Christian; and we fearlessly ask, whether it is easier to believe that Jesus, a mere Galilean peasant, lived, and taught, and died under such circumstances, and yet still exercises so mighty an influence in the world, reigning in men's hearts and ruling their lives, as even infidels admit; or to believe that the solution of the mystery, and the only key to a right understanding of what is otherwise unaccountable, lies in the fact that this Jesus of Nazareth was more than man—that He was—INCARNATE GOD.



CHAPTER VI.

THE OBJECTION ARISING OUT OF THE DEATH OF
CHRIST.

THE storm of criticism which has gathered round the Deity of Christ has ever chosen His Death as the object on which to spend its violence. The salient feature of Christianity necessarily becomes the central point of attack. More and more prominent becomes the Cross of Christ, as witness the books that have been written, the polemical controversies, the assaults of infidels, the rallying of Christians: the point where they meet to fight or to fraternize is the cross of Christ, and the adherents of Christianity whatever their creed or shibboleth are drawn together by this one magnet. There is no denying that the first founders of the new Religion gave to this the prominence which it has never ceased to hold, nor can you find any-

thing in all the religions of the world that at all resembles Christianity in this. The cross has become the very symbol of Christianity because the Church has always been alive to the importance of Christ's death as the central fact, and the world has consented to regard it in the same light.

The *life* of Christ is admitted to be the most manly pure and beautiful ever lived in human form, and too much now-a-days cannot be made of His life even by those who make light of His death, but it is a fact that the thing which arrests the attention, satisfies the conscience, and moves the heart, is the *death* of Christ, and Christianity is the only Religion in which such a story as that of the Cross is to be found, in which men are reprov'd taught and sanctified by the death of their Deliverer.

On no subject, perhaps, have been advanced more varied or conflicting views, all combating the idea that the death of Christ was more than that of a mere man. Some have urged the inconsistency and impossibility of associating death with

the existence and energy of Deity even though Incarnate, and in this unwittingly they are in agreement with the principle laid down in the Second Article in the Book of Common Prayer, that "the Godhead and Manhood were joined together in one Person never to be divided," a principle which underlies the incorruption of the body of Christ and the very fact of the Resurrection, and which gives to that death a distinctiveness and a superiority, which render it both consistent and possible with the existence and energy of Deity.

Others have urged that as Enoch and Elijah were translated, so it would have been worthier of a *God* if, having assumed our human nature, He had preserved it uninjured, and defied the power of death to harm it. But as we have seen in considering His lowly life, so we perceive in His death something even worthier of a God; the act of placing Himself on the lowest level of human experience, that, living or dying, men may be linked through His experience with God. Yes, and beyond the confines of this life, in their disembodied

state, the spirits who have passed from us, whatever their condition, capabilities and feelings, know that Christ has Himself passed through the experience of Hades, while for three days He awaited there His own resurrection from the dead.

It is commonly urged by modern continental writers, and by many among ourselves, that in the death of Christ we have only an example of holy fortitude and patience, of noble self-sacrifice and zeal, that the Son of God appeared in the nature of man to show us a being like ourselves, in the holy obedience of His life and the pain and shame of His death, wholly submissive to the will of heaven ; in other words, simply to teach us how to live and how to die.

And strangely enough they are equally ready to point out how unworthy of a God is the death of Christ, because it is inferior even to that of men ! The agony and prayer in Gethsemane, and the cry of anguish on the cross are quoted to show the inferiority of His faith and courage. Martyrs, it is said, whose life has evidenced far less fortitude and faith, have perished at the stake amid the

torturing flames, have died upon the cruel rack, nay, have been literally crucified, but they have died rejoicing, and even singing, while Jesus, to whose holy, and devoted, and zealous life theirs was vastly inferior, falls apparently far behind them in His death.

These two objections are contradictory, and the latter is especially unfair. Martyrs may have died cheerfully, even joyfully, but we do not know what shrinkings, and wrestlings, and agonies preceded the calm, firm step, what sighs and groans the dying note of triumph. Nor do we know what special and fiery temptations assailed Christ in the garden and on the cross. If the Tempter departed from Him after his first great encounter "only for a season," we may be sure that he returned again and again to the charge. Scarcely an hour before leaving the upper room to descend through the city gate to the brook Kedron, Christ had distinctly stated aloud "the Prince of this world cometh." That coming is the key to the agony of Gethsemane, nor can we doubt that the conflict would be repeated on the Cross.

The idea that the human spirit of Christ was afflicted in the thought of His treatment at the hands of His own countrymen, and that in the bitterness of disappointment at such a termination of all His teaching and philanthropic zeal His heart was breaking, is not to be treated with careless contempt, but if herein lay an important element in His misery, it is not sufficient to account for it.

The mystery of Christ's death still remains, but it only forces on us the same conclusion which His life compels us to adopt. He neither died nor lived as other men live and die, because He neither lived nor died a mere man. There is but one key to the solution of the mystery. Not the weight of His own sorrows, but the weight of our sins crushed out of Him the agonizing prayer of the garden and the heart-rending cry of the cross; no martyr ever endured what Christ suffered; and that His crushed and suffering human nature was sustained at all is the very evidence of the presence of the Divine.

The idea of atonement by sacrifice is not so

foreign to the human mind that it should be repellent. In all ages, certainly in all ancient religions, and among nearly all people there have been in use sacrifices of men and animals, some expiatory to make atonement, others propitiatory to win favor. The Syrians with their god Moloch, the Carthaginians, and others, nay, the ancient Druids in our own land offered human sacrifices, a custom not yet wholly extinct among some heathen tribes. And even in these human sacrifices, horrible as they were, the idea undoubtedly was that of a greater value in the offering, and a greater hope of atonement.

It was a question asked long ago, long before Jewish types set forth the sacrifice of Christ,—“How shall mortal man be just before God?” It is the great religious problem of the human mind from the beginning, a cry that belongs to no one age or country or state of civilization, it is an intensely human cry. Hence the varied religious systems of the world, each according to the age and country of its birth. At one time men as priests and prophets trading upon this craving of the mind,

and working upon men's superstitions and fears : at another philosophers venturing to furnish a solution of the great problem : but none ever really answering the cry or satisfying the demand of the human soul. In one respect these ancients teach modern sceptics a lesson. We never find them setting aside the idea of the Divine Justice, or the *need* of a sacrifice ; their ideas of God may have been very imperfect, but we see them prostrate before their altars in the deepest humiliation, and not daring to hope in a mercy independent of some satisfaction to the Divine Justice.

To the Jewish mind the idea of atonement by sacrifice was not only familiar, but stamped with the highest authority ; they however could not see this in the death of Christ for the very same reason that Strauss and Renan and others cannot—they rejected His Deity. And so we are reduced to the idea of Christ's death which men of the school of Bushnell and Young have advanced, or to the more popular idea of Christ as a great moral power—a perfect example—and so forth, which are only new forms of the old spirit of

a philosophizing hostility to the Deity of Christ.

A modern theory of the Atonement is that "Christ bore our sins on His feelings," and the instances of the great and good, as Xavier, Howard, and others, are often quoted to illustrate the life and suffering of Christ, as simply an extraordinary man, moved strongly by the love of His kind, laboring in teaching and doing good, and then falling a victim to the prejudices of man, and dying a philanthropic martyr in the prosecution of His labors. And to prove how one man may bear the sins of others without any idea of substitution or atonement, the case of the patriot is cited, how he is burdened and bowed down by day and by night when his country so dear to him is torn by faction, and its laws and liberties are at stake; but such a man has no right to say that he is bearing his country's sins, he may in loving sympathy be bearing its sorrows more largely than others, but its sins are national, and belong to him in common with all his countrymen, and are his own right and property as a citizen.

Now the reply to all these theories is that they are one-sided. We want a sphere, not a hemisphere of truth. "The moon," it is said, "shows only an earthward side, but although we cannot see the moon's heavenward side it has one; so has Christ's sacrifice, and of the one as well as the other we can conceive the heavenward side if we cannot see it." And to speak of the death of Christ as it affects men only, is to look at truth as we look at the moon. It is all very well for men to tell us of a Christ who triumphed over every form of sin and temptation even unto death, and calls upon us to do the same. Daily experience tells us that if this is all the Gospel can do for us, it will leave us not much better than it finds us. There is not only sin to be overcome, but guilt to be removed, the loving Father is also the just Judge: we need an example indeed and that the man Christ Jesus *might* furnish, but we need an atonement also and that *only a God* could accomplish.

Anyhow, instead of the death of Christ being an objectionable feature in Christianity, it is its

attraction and its power. There is nothing in this world which next to a belief in one Supreme God so much unites men the most different. Of course we know that any religion, Buddhism, Mahometanism, or any other, unites its adherents, but we mean to say that in the Cross of Christ there is a power of attraction and a principle of cohesion which no other religious system ever possessed ; and that which enforces itself upon the attention, claims the adherence, and ensures the unity of all, is the sacrifice of the Cross. Here is a centre for the ever-revolving mind of man, a rallying point for the scattered beliefs and hopes and affections of the human race, where all minds may meet, all faiths may rest, all hopes be fixed, all affections be centred ; here all are exalted and reduced to the same level ; here all are imbued with those principles of Justice, Truth, and Holiness, of Love and Liberty, which have been at work and still are working to remove the obstructions and to bridge over the gulfs which separate mankind.

Now if there was nothing more in the act of Christ's dying, or in the efficacy of His death, than

might attach to the death of any extraordinarily good man, then His death as it is put before us in the New Testament, and the significance constantly attached to it, would be to us one of the greatest wonders and mysteries which the Gospel contains.

Men tell us that Christ lived as our example, we ask did He die only as our example? If men have died as painfully, and more patiently and heroically than Christ did, what then is the lesson of His death? Is it to teach us that the purer and holier and more unselfishly we live the more we shall suffer? The world has known but One perfect man, that man is overwhelmed and crushed by a cruel and shameful death. Behold the reward of virtue! Is this the lesson it is intended to teach us? Truly if we stop here, it is wholly unintelligible. It is justly said, "A clear and cordial conviction of His Deity is inseparable from any true conception of His Atonement," and it is equally true that without the same conviction Christ's death of shame and agony is as great a mystery as the Atonement itself.

When we think of the effects of that death, of

the power which it exercises in the world to-day, of the influence which it exerts upon the hearts and lives of so many millions, we can see in it only an utterly inexplicable mystery, unless we accept it as the death of One who was not only man, but was also God.



CHAPTER VII.

THE EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM THE CHARACTER
OF CHRIST.

T was once said, "There is enough for us all in the central figure of Christianity." This is a great truth. There is not a grander study, nor one worthier the pen of the historian or the eloquence of the orator, nor one richer in thought and evidence, than Christ, Himself "the central figure of Christianity." But it is just this study of Christ to which the majority of sceptical men will not devote themselves, preferring to give a blind and indolent allegiance to the opinions of a prejudiced few who have studied the character of Christ with a view to establish their own preconceived opinions. And if this seems unfair language to use of those who would rob Jesus of the crown of His Divinity, we have only to call to mind the words of the illus-

trious Frenchman, "Christ's glorious vision of the kingdom of God incessantly flaming before his eyes had given him the vertigo." When M. Renan tells us that Christ's enthusiastic admiration for the sin-sick and the suffering had turned His head, while it reminds us of those who in Christ's lifetime said that He was "beside Himself," it shows us to what shifts even the greatest and cleverest minds may be driven in support of their own opinions.

And the fault of so many is that they take up with the opinion of some great author or orator, and then question the belief of other people without even looking into the Historical evidence, or studying the thing for themselves. They never calmly weigh the facts, or examine the witnesses, or give the matter an honest trial, and then they say, "we can't believe it," whereas in plain English they ought to say, as good old Bishop Burnet puts it, "we are resolved, let the evidence be what it will, we won't believe it." Some actually go so far as to question the possibility of believing at all. They say that "it is but an

opinion at the best," that a man is not altogether master of what he believes or does not believe, and that it is next to impossible to be certain about such things at all. This sounds very clever, and is so plausible as to carry away a great many thoughtless people, but it is subversive of all the laws of evidence and utterly unpractical.

We are every day accepting as facts things of which we have no personal cognisance whatever, and they are to us not a matter of opinion only, but a matter of certainty. And the principle on which this certainty is based is a right one. It is upon evidence, not evidence merely that is probable, then it would be only an opinion, but evidence that cannot fairly be questioned, and then it is believing. And this is exactly the principle which is carried out week after week in our law courts, and this sort of belief—belief in the testimony of others—is not only a reasonable thing, but it is the very thing on which all the government and justice in the world depend.

Now here in the gospels we have four little books, which a man can easily read through in a

day, and the contents of which for all general purposes he may master in a month, and here is all the evidence which the wisest man needs to prove the justice and the truth of those claims which are urged on behalf of Christ in these pages.

In studying the *character* of Christ, let us for argument's sake take the lowest ground, that He was only a man. We will not even adopt the notion of the Gnostics, a notion not altogether foreign to the thoughts of many, who would gladly embrace any theory that would reconcile the exalted character of Christ with their rejection of His Deity, a notion borrowed from the old philosophies, that He was one of a succession of Divine beings or Æons, a Divine nature emanating from the Supreme Deity, an embodiment of communicated power, and wisdom, and holiness. We will regard Him in the light of His real manhood.

We see Him as a man among men, with the same bodily functions, the same nature ; He eats, drinks, sleeps, is weary, suffers, groans, weeps ;

joy, sorrow, anger, pity, amazement, fear, love, all are His ; He is true to all the essential instincts of humanity. We find Him ever speaking, moving, acting as a man. His dignity is not that of one who holds himself aloof from others, there is no contempt of human joys and social happiness, no inability or unwillingness to enter into the circumstances of ordinary life. His purity is not that of the ascetic or the hermit, cut off from the world around Him. His faith, and patience, and love are not those of a man who has never had them tested, and thwarted, and trampled on. His views of men are not derived from speculation or books, but from real life and intercourse with His fellows.

Of the private life of Jesus, but few passing glimpses are afforded us, but they are sufficient to show us that the admiration and respect of His friends was never impoverished by the richness of His condescension, that the tenderest social intercourse was never characterized by the absence of dignified authority and profound wisdom, that He could be present at a marriage feast or at a Pharisee's dinner-party, or at a friend's supper

table, without compromising His dignity or endangering His reputation, showing us that we are doing our duty by the world best, in reference to the social pursuits and enjoyments of life, not when we condemn them wholesale and thoughtlessly put them from us, but when, wherever in themselves they are reasonable and innocent, we transfer them to the purer atmosphere of Christian influence.

Now it is needless to dwell upon the fact that there is no such character, no record of such a character, as that of Christ existing in the world. The nearest approach to it, so near that the resemblance was observed by the Fathers, is the description, attributed to Plato, of an imaginary being whose heroic virtue shines all the brighter for the shame of guilt that covers him; but this is only ideal, and even this falls short of Christ. Now we ask, how comes this to pass? If the character of Christ is an invention, who invented it? Not the Jews of the period, "They," says a sceptical writer, "were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the

Gospels :” not the early Christians, even Renan repudiates this, for if the early Christians invented the character of Christ, it is fitly asked, who invented the early Christians ?

We can only explain the existence of such a character, such a sublime embodiment of all that the world has ever conceived of purity, and love, and patience, by the fact that Jesus Christ existed. *Some one* (it is said) must have thought the thoughts of Christ, and used the language of Christ, some one must have conceived the sinless life, the perfect character, and we agree with Theodore Parker that “none but a Jesus could have fabricated a Jesus,” none but a faultless man could have fabricated a faultless life, a character in which none can detect a single flaw. But no man ever has lived before or since, whose character at all resembled Christ’s, and admitting this, we are at once placed in this dilemma ; either Christ was a man so unlike other men that He was not a real man, or He was God.

And it is the character of Christ which lays such hold on men. “The palm of victory belongs

to him who has been mighty in deeds as well as in words." A man's character after all is the real basis of his influence for good, and the test of his character is not what he says, however wise, or good, or true, it is the life that he lives. Now in Christ we have not only the lofty words, but the noble deeds, not only the holy and loving doctrine, but the holy life, the self-sacrificing toil and willing suffering. The truth He teaches is felt because He has made it felt in His life, the world can grasp that life as a substantial fact, and it is that life which gives weight to the truth taught by Him who lived it.

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

"In morality (says Renan) as in art, to *say* is nothing, to *do* is everything." Now we all know that in the case of pictures by the old masters, the value lies not in the subject, but in the picture itself; the question is not—what is the idea which the picture represents? but, as to the picture itself, is it really the work of Rembrandt, or

Rubens, or Titian, or Correggio? and it is valued accordingly. So of morality, it is not what a man says, but what he *is*. In this lies the wonderful influence of Christ, even upon those who call His claims in question.

Quietly and fairly study the character of Christ—His deep love to God, His entire submission to His will, His unwavering faith, His grand and lofty aims, His devotedness to the interests of mankind, His efforts to improve the condition of the world, His brave spirit, His dignity of character, His superiority to the influences which operate upon others, His disinterested unselfishness, His great-hearted sympathy, His ceaseless activity, untiring zeal, and indomitable perseverance, His perfect truth and purity, His matchless patience, and meekness, and humility, and compassion, and tenderness—He stands portrayed before us as none ever was.

“Thou seemest human and Divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou.”

No wonder that intelligent men, like the members of the famous Brahmo Somaj, while they

reject the gospel, will not refuse to admit that Jesus was the best and holiest man that ever lived. Yes, in the Jesus of the Gospels we find our very highest conception of purity, and wisdom, and patience, and love, the most beautiful and attractive morality, a life and a character such as we believe a perfect man might have, but which no man ever possessed, and no man ever before portrayed, and again we ask, is it an invention? or, is it a fact? If an invention, who invented it? Who could have invented it in that degenerate age? As Rousseau says, "the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

"Is it possible," says this writer, "that this sacred personage should be a mere man? Do we find that He assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectarian? What sweetness, what purity in His manner! what an affecting gracefulness in His delivery! what sublimity in His maxims! what profound wisdom in His discourses! what presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth in His replies! How great the command of His passions! where is the man who could so live and

so die, without weakness and ostentation? where is the man, where the philosopher? If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

And even modern sceptics are constrained to do homage to the character of Christ. Strauss, the most eminent of German rationalists, and one of the ablest of sceptical exegetists, says, "Jesus represents within the religious sphere the highest point, beyond which posterity cannot go: and no perfect piety is possible without His presence in the heart." It is strange how we hear words like these from the lips of men who carry our hearts with them to the very threshold of Christ's Deity but enter not: men who talk of Christianity now as "a power in the universe," and speak of "the sublime person of its Founder," and uphold Jesus as "the perfect model of human nature;" exalt Him, in fact, beyond anything man ever was or has been since, and yet deny in Him the supernatural.

For to deny the supernatural, and to get rid of the supernatural in Christ, this is the delight and

aim of modern sceptics, and still they are met by the difficulty, their appreciation of which their incessant efforts show, that the life and character of Christ can in no way be accounted for on purely natural grounds. The great French writer calls Him "the incomparable man to whom universal consciousness has justly decreed the title of the Son of God, because in this is His great originality, He is utterly distinguished from His race." Yes, His character, His life, His influence are admitted to be wholly exceptional from our common humanity—and there is but one theory upon which we can account for it, the theory that involves the supernatural, the theory which we affirm is also the fact contained in the Gospels, that Christ was not a mere man, but that He was also God.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM THE TEACHING OF
CHRIST.

THIS is an age of Teachers. Schools of thought of every shade have sprung up with amazing rapidity. Men have abandoned themselves to downright speculation, and in language that is almost unintelligible to ordinary mortals, have soared away into regions of thought, where it is often only cloud-land. Positivism and negativism, theism and materialism, can boast of numerous advocates. The names of Kant, Comte, Hegel, Bain, Mill, Martineau, Viscount Amberley, and others, are only too well known among the leaders of opinion in their various schools, men all of them, by the very honesty of their belief, or want of belief, exerting a dangerous influence over many. Then there are the scientific philosophers of the age, Owen, and

Buckle, and Darwin, and Wallace, and Herbert Spencer, their knowledge great, their influence great, and their contributions to the cause of science undeniable, but more or less the opponents of revealed truth.

And then we have our Christian philosophers, who accept the Gospels as a History, or a myth, a fact enveloped a hundredfold in fiction ; the author of the *Vie de Jésus*, doing away with all that is Divine in the Saviour, just as Strauss attempts to do away with all that is miraculous in the record, and men like Hanson and Thomas Scott among ourselves. But whatever their peculiar views and doctrines, what after all is it but a modern form of the old philosophy ? Reason is to be the judge instead of the handmaid of Faith, and Revelation is to be relegated to the mythland of the world's childhood, or to the superstition and ignorance of the later ages.

And yet if the world were asked to-day as to its greatest Teacher, there is no name that would so readily, so instinctively, or so reasonably occur to the mind, or rise to the lips, as the name of Jesus.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of infidelity to produce one, there is none who can anywhere approach Him as a rival. Very diligently indeed have such efforts been made, but they have all served only to exalt Christ by their failure, and His opponents now are reduced to the necessity either of abandoning Him altogether, or of falling into the fashion of speaking of Him as the best of men, the greatest of Reformers, and the wisest of Teachers.

Men run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, opinions clash more because minds are brought into closer contact, not only individuals, but nations also inquire of one another concerning Christ: philosophies which have had their day are laid on one side, superstitions which have tyrannized over men's minds are slipping like rotten, broken chains from off their prisoners. And every false system that is swept away, every superstitious feeling that dies out, every vain philosophy that is blown to the winds, every fanciful theory that is exploded, makes way for the clearer view of the Supreme Teacher.

Teachers there have been in the days of old, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, grand men of the ancient times, who command our veneration for the genius which inspired and the sentiments which ennobled them, but until Christ came, what the ideas of mankind generally were about God, the soul, and futurity, let heathen philosophy and religion disclose. "Their gods, even Zeus best and greatest, were only nature-gods, their thrones tottered to the whims of fate, they were of necessity mortal; while even their heaven, their boasted Elysium, was not to survive the wreck of matter." Idolatry never really received any important check, the ideas of creation were as vague and contradictory as of the Creator, the government of the world baffled and perplexed, the theories about the soul were as varied as they were crude and strange, and the future was a hopeless puzzle. The soul of man craved for something more than sacrifice, and ceremony, and self-inflicted penance, it was filled with a troubled unrest; but it was all only a yearning, a reaching after something aimlessly in the dark. Religion

there was, the religion of statecraft and priestcraft, of fear and of gloom, such as that which Christian teachers encounter in idolatrous lands to-day, filling the minds of men with views of God of the strangest and most perverted kind.

Admitting even the advanced views of their wisest and best teachers, where is the philosophy or the philanthropy which does not pale before the light of Christ's teaching? and whence, but from this, is it that all the brightness of modern philosophy and philanthropy has been borrowed? Christ is distinguished from all the sons of men by His teachings, by the morality and benevolence, by the breadth of thought, and the human sympathy which characterize them, above all by "the vital significance" of His teachings, and the eternal destiny which belongs to them. It is no exaggerated statement that "it has taken the world all these eighteen centuries fairly to become accustomed to the dazzling brightness of those lightning flashes of truth which were given forth by the well of Samaria, and by the grave of Lazarus." Yes, the world is only now learning the deep, abiding,

eternal meaning of many of the great truths which Jesus uttered, truths which the world had never dreamed of, and on the evidence of which we are constrained to recognize in Him a Teacher Divine.

None had ever taught as Jesus taught. As a teacher He was *sui generis*; His language, His style, His manner, the times and the places of His teaching, all were original. Publicans and sinners, women out of the streets, lepers out of the tombs, the very poor, despised Samaritans, and little children, all to Him were welcome hearers. He settled in no town, hired no building, belonged to no school. Out among the mountains, in a boat on the lake, in the synagogue on the Sabbath, or in some Pharisee's house on the week-day, early in the morning, late in the evening, at a marriage feast, or in the chamber of death, there might be found the Great Teacher. His teaching was with supreme authority, yet with perfect simplicity, full of illustration and story, yet never wanting in majesty, attractive as a picture, yet weighty with the import of eternal reality.

As a teacher Christ possessed all the elements of

power. That He was one of the people was doubtless an element of popularity in the life of Christ, which had much to do with the favour which He found with the multitudes, and the opposition He met with from the rulers, whose pride it was to be of southern origin, natives of polished Judæa, whereas He was a Galilean, and worse still a Nazarene. With Jesus there is no appeal to human authorities, if He quotes Moses or the Prophets, it is to explain and to enforce them, He bases His teaching on no traditions, He deems it sufficient to introduce His teachings in His own name, and speaks with the authority of a Judge. His language is always appropriate, always strong enough to be pointed, always varied enough to be eloquent, never above His subject, never below it, simple, natural, easy to be understood. Symbolism and illustration entered largely into Christ's teaching, as we know in Eastern lands it does to a large extent into the very conversation, but it was never forced, always simple and natural, and drawn from scenes, and subjects, and events familiar to the hearers. His teaching too, was characterized by the absence of

sternness and severity (except where rebuke was specially evoked), of ostentation or pride, of a harsh or overbearing manner, and is marked by gentleness, tenderness, and compassion. And there was an adaptation of His teaching to His hearers. This patient adaptation of Himself to others, is a beautiful feature in His character, and was doubtless one cause of His popularity. He adapted Himself to the circumstances and wants of the people, He went where they were likely to be found, and taught so that the most ignorant, uneducated, and neglected might understand.

“ His sermons were the healthful talk
That shorter made the mountain walk,
His wayside texts were flowers and birds.
Where mingled with His gracious words,
The rustle of the tamarisk tree,
And ripple wash of Galilee.”—J. G. WHITTIER.

Take only one instance, the Sermon on the Mount. We find in it the most critical exposition of the Law, the most searching analysis of the human heart, the most practical application of the great truths and sentiments which sway the human mind to the affairs of daily life, the most natural and vivid illustrations (the beam and the mote, the

dogs and the swine, the two roads, the trees in the orchard, the "too late" guests, the two houses built up in the hills, the city set on an hill probably in sight, the fowls of the air flying over their heads, the lilies of the field growing around them, the scars on the mountain side made by the torrents), the most solemn warnings, the sweetest comforts, depth of thought brought up to the level of the humblest hearer, in the most grave simple and forcible language, and the whole enforced with an appeal the most striking, and with the majesty of irresistible authority.

What a portrait of a Teacher is this! And yet how far, far below the true likeness! Whence this prodigy of wisdom springing up in such an age and among such a people? How about "the theory of climates," which makes a religion to spring up in a land, even as certain soils and temperatures produce the plants to whose growth they are adapted? Was it not in the same region that the movement most opposed to Christianity took its rise?

"Measure the distance," says M. de Pressensé,

“from the Talmud to the Gospel, the distance which separates the most pretentious and tortuous scholasticism and pedantry from the book of the poor and simple; remember that the one and the other were cradled in Galilee, and then see if it is possible to maintain the theory of climates in the interpretation of great religious movements.”

Another theory by which to account for Christ as a Teacher is that He borrowed largely from others, and that He uttered but the sentiments of all the best and the greatest—and we are pointed to this and that ancient writer, Seneca, Socrates, or Confucius, and Christ is put into the category with these men: and to what does it amount? In the writings of some of these men are found many of the sentiments and maxims which Jesus taught, and because forsooth in these wise and virtuous sages, there is found some little good of humanity, shall we say some spark of the Divinity left, therefore Jesus is to be reduced to the level of Zoroaster, Plato and others. But busy as men have been in all ages to find, in the writings of the good and great of old, thoughts and teaching like those of

Christ, they have signally failed. There is indeed much of wisdom and truth and beauty in those old writers, but there is also so much of ignorance, superstition and error, that to place all this by the side of the wisdom and truth and beauty and purity of Christ's teachings, is for such men to injure their own cause, while they immeasurably exalt the excellency of Christ.

Christ as a teacher takes higher ground and discovers other and higher knowledge than any other human teacher ever even knew. He does not merely touch upon the surface of things, nor launch forth into mere generalizations, nor merely string together pithy sentences, and good moral maxims. He goes straight to men's consciences and hearts, He touches "the great forces of thought and feeling which move the whole world." He "drops His plummet line" as no other human teacher ever did, right down into the depths of the human soul. There is no teacher like Christ who, while He brings down into the mind the truth of God, lifts the mind up to God, taking us with Him in His teaching right through all "the darkness

and mist of human prejudice and human passion " into the very presence and heart of God.

There is another point of comparison. You may take that Sermon on the Mount, you may find a bit of it in a Roman writer, a bit of it in a Greek author, a bit of it in the Persian, and so on, but can you find in any one of these anything like the Sermon on the Mount? Moreover, Jesus not only preached the Sermon on the Mount, *He lived it*. He furnished the illustration of every truth and moral precept in His own life. Crucified eighteen centuries ago, He is to-day exerting among us the power of His teaching; by His life "helping every one of us who is striving after a noble virtuous self-denying life." Of whom else can this be said? What inspiration is there like the genius of Christianity, that constrains men to embody in their lives the noblest purest loveliest example ever given to the world?


"None of earth's gifted ones (we are told) who have enjoyed the largest opportunities, and have profited by the purest culture, can be, even for a moment, compared with that Nazarene carpenter,

who had no opportunities—no culture.” “The teachings of Jesus (says M. Renan), underlie the entire progress and life, not of the age alone, but of the eternal ages”—and His teachings are called “the true revelation of God.” Now we ask, is it not strange, that we should be called upon to believe all this, to believe that Jesus, and only Jesus, has had correct views of the most momentous truths respecting God and humanity, has unfolded the true relations that exist between the children of men and the Great Father, has exhibited in a life of spotless purity, the highest and loveliest truths ever taught, and yet that His testimony concerning Himself is to be refused, that He cannot, must not, be invested with the attributes of Deity. If we are to believe Christ at all we must believe Him altogether. Either He was a false teacher, a position which on the foregoing evidence is simply untenable, or He is the true God.



CHAPTER IX.

THE EVIDENCE DERIVED FROM THE MIRACLES OF
CHRIST.

T is impossible in a few pages to do more than touch upon the subject of miracles, a subject which in itself is worth the study of a lifetime, and has given birth to libraries. The miraculous, we know, by many people is altogether denied, and the mere mention of a miracle has the effect of provoking their keenest sarcasm. Men talk very confidently about the "order of nature," and the "laws of nature," and the "immutability of nature," but such terms too often serve only as a cloak to cover the ignorance or unbelief of the infinite and unknown law, which is the working of the Omnipotent will of the Creator.

A miracle, as Mozley has pointed out, is not the irregularity that thoughtless persons suppose. It

is the proper medium or link between the visible and the invisible. Taken separately, it is out of relation to either, but it is in perfect relation to both taken together, as the key or instrument of admission from one to the other. Every miracle will be found to have a purpose and design. Looked at by itself it would appear as strange, as to many of us appear some of the tools which we see in art or husbandry, of whose use we are ignorant, although as mediums between the workman and the material they are each in their exact order and place, but looked at in the same way, as a medium between the visible and invisible, between matter and spirit, a miracle need no longer appear as an anomaly, but will fall into perfect order and place.

Now a miracle being such a medium, men have in all ages denied to men the power of working miracles of themselves, and regarded such power as the evidence of a friendly relation with a superior Power, and as the proof of a Divine commission. A miracle being something that seems to interrupt, or counteract, or be independent of

the laws of nature, as they are known to human experience, as for instance when the iron head of an axe floats, or a burning fiery furnace does no injury to three men thrown into it, or the surface of the lake allows a man to walk upon it, and these laws of nature being only, under another name, the laws of God, any alteration or suspension of these laws can be only through the agency or permission of the Divine Being Himself.

Hence we find all pretenders to Divine Authority, all claimants to the possession of a Divine Revelation appealing to miracles in support of their claims. A miracle is wrought, the finger of God is recognized, and the claims of the gifted favored one are admitted. Thus Moses appealed from Israel to the Egyptian plagues, the passage of the Red Sea, the water out of the flinty rock, the manna from heaven, as evidence of his Divine appointment as their Guide and Lawgiver. Of old, at Memphis, Babylon or Delphi, as in the Roman Church to-day, and among the Hindoos and Japanese, we find the same appeal to miracles. So also with Christ. The appeal is equally to miracles.

The four well-known *criteria* do indeed serve to distinguish Christ's miracles from those of the Koran or the Shasters, or from others, viz. : that the miracle be such that men's outward senses can take cognizance of it, that it be performed publicly in the presence of witnesses, that a memorial of it be preserved, and that such memorial or monument commence at the time of the fact, and not in after years. To argue, however, and discuss, to lay down axioms, and premises, and proofs about religious truth is eminently unsatisfactory. Theological debate is an endless and often profitless pursuit, theory meets theory, and argument is opposed to argument, and but one side is satisfied with the conclusion.

Historical evidence after all supplies the most incontrovertible argument, and an appeal to undoubted facts is conclusive. Seeing then that there is no professed revelation which does not deal largely in the *record* of miracles, so that the Christian teacher finds that it is not in itself sufficient evidence of the Divine origin of the Gospel that it is a record of miracles, among

Mahometans, Hindoos, Buddhists, or Japanese, who themselves deal in miracles, it is easy to perceive the momentous importance of the evidence by which the *truth of the record* is established, for in establishing the truth of the record the miracle is confirmed as a fact, and if the miracles of the Gospels be accepted as facts, they must be accepted also as credentials of the truthfulness of Him who wrought them.

And if we are to believe in Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, or the very Emperor Augustus, in whose reign Christ was born, as not merely mythical but historical characters, and the record of their lives as trustworthy, then we are bound to accept on the same kind of evidence, only more reliable, the character, and teaching, and works of Christ as substantial truths. "The history of Socrates," says Rousseau, "which no one presumes to doubt, is not so closely attested as that of Jesus Christ," and it is most justly remarked by Archbishop Whately, "To doubt here is to question the truth of all history, and to regard with suspicion every fact we have not personally seen or known."

A study of the miracle-life of Jesus, in its vastness and variety, its grandeur and minutiae, is sufficient to remove Him out of the category of all who have ever claimed miraculous power. The *knowledge* which He possessed is in itself enough to force home upon us the conviction of His Deity. Now it is the knowledge of the hidden Nathanael, the garden he is in, the tree which covers him, the subject of his devotions; now of a particular fish, in a particular part of the sea, at a particular moment, and with a particular coin in its mouth; of a certain man, in a certain spot, carrying a pitcher; of a woman in the crowd behind Him, what she has done, why she has done it, and what she has felt; now He is reading the hearts and answering the thoughts of disciples or Pharisees around Him, just as if they had given utterance to them in His hearing; now He startles His host by a public exposure of his uncharitable imaginings; the woman by the well hears her sinful past recounted by a perfect stranger; the doubting Apostle hears his words repeated by his Master. These are but instances of a knowledge,

which surely is to be classed with the miraculous, and leaves room for wonder how any man can honestly study it, and yet doubt that Jesus was Divine.

And what is *prophecy* but miracle? To the power of such knowledge attaches equally the idea of the miraculous, and indeed it possesses this advantage, that whereas miracles may be said to be only temporary, and those who witness them to have been deceived, the evidence from prophecy is one whose strength increases with its age, and whose force is ever accumulating. Now in Christ is seen the miracle of Prophecy both in its fulfilment and prediction, so that while the history of the world is continually developing the truth of all He said, we have come to speak of the prophecies of old as the Gospel in Isaiah or the Gospel in Ezekiel.

The miracles of Christ belong to the domain of matter and of spirit; nature, men, demons obey Him. From the guiding star of Bethlehem to the darkened sun of Calvary, all the forces of nature recognize His presence and subserve His purposes.

Water obeys His bidding and becomes wine, the laws of gravitation are suspended that the surface of the lake may feel the tread of His feet, winds and waves sleep at the sound of His voice, bread multiplies as He breaks it, the tree withers at His rebuke, the fish furnishes Him tribute.

The bodies and minds of men He controls at will. Vision returns to the sightless eyeballs, sound penetrates the closed chambers of the ear, the tongue-tied regain the power of speech, lost limbs are renewed, fevers abate in the blood, leprosy dies out of the flesh, death pales while pallid forms blush again into life as the departed spirit returns ; godless traders flee from the temple courts, conscience-stricken rulers go out silently one by one from the synagogue, armed officers fall backward helpless to the ground ; demons dread His coming, and flee from His presence, and the worst cases of fiend-possession afford the most wondrous and convincing proofs of His power.

It is not, however, only what Christ did, but what He was. Miracles attend His birth, crowd

into the years of His brief ministry, and make glorious His death. His whole life is a miracle from first to last. We agree with those who maintain that of all miracles Christ Himself is the greatest, and that beyond any other Christ is His own evidence. The language of fashionable Infidelity is "He was a wondrous fanatic! a sublime mystic!" and there we are told to let the matter rest! But it by no means rests there.

For although the age of miracles has passed away, and Christianity being thoroughly established does not now need their repetition, although we have no visible Christ walking among us, feeding the hungry thousands, healing the diseased, cleansing the polluted, speaking peace to the wretched, and offering rest to the weary; yet have we among us a living mystery which, as the First Napoleon once said, "subsists by its own force, and proceeds from a mind which is not human." Yes, the age of miracles may have gone by, and yet there is in the world to-day a power by which longing souls are satisfied, the depraved are reformed, the miserable are blessed, and the restless

find peace, a power to which the loftiest intellects and the greatest lives are subjected, and by whose leverage the whole race of man is morally elevated. This power, in all its marvellous workings, we know as Christianity, but in what way can we separate it from Christ? It is a standing miracle, an ever-abiding evidence to the claims of the Son of God.

The actual miracles wrought by Christ were not more wonderful than are the results of Christianity we can ourselves witness, but these miracles were the necessary proofs of His Divine mission, and are appealed to by Him as the seal of God upon His testimony, both of Himself and of the Father. It was the mission of Christ to make a supernatural revelation of God to man, and it is only natural to expect that a supernatural revelation should be supported by supernatural evidence. Jesus lays claim to Divine honors, and human nature very properly expects, and even demands, that here, if anywhere, there should be miracles. Even if unnecessary, or out of place in another, they would only be consistent with the claims and character of

God's own Son, and it seems to be the most natural thing in the world that a supernatural being should do supernatural works.

When we read how Christ healed the sick, cast out devils, and raised the dead, while we are held in wonderment, we yet mentally acknowledge that it is all in perfect keeping with His declared character and mission, and that if these miracles or some such miracles had been wanting, we should have had a right to question His assertions concerning Himself and His mission. The exalted character of those miracles is in perfect harmony with the exalted Being of Him who wrought them. They are referred to by Himself as the seal of God, and on that seal we recognize the stamp of His own Divinity.

And here, more than any miracle of Christ, His Resurrection, that miracle of all miracles, demands special attention. If it can be shown to be true, then all other miracles may readily be admitted, then Jesus is indeed the Christ, then we have a cause sufficient to account for all the results of Christianity in the world.

It is worthy of notice how on the one hand the writers of the New Testament appeal unceasingly to the miracle of the Resurrection and to it alone, and how on the other hand, the latest attacks on Christianity aim at the elucidation of this miracle to the exclusion of the supernatural. It has been reserved for modern times to advance the supposition that Christ did not really die, that, being taken down alive from the Cross, He was "recovered from a swoon." This is not only directly contrary to the Gospel narrative, but neither do the early infidel writers and adversaries of Christianity advance it, nor do any of the early Fathers refer to it as an argument of their opponents. The death of Christ was accepted as an undoubted fact, and being established as a fact of history, this modern suggestion falls harmless to the ground.

A favorite explanation is that of illusion and "the theory of visions," which has been ably dealt with by the author of "Reasons for believing in Christianity." Canon Farrar, in his "Life of Christ," certainly seems to regard this as the

solution of the appearances of saints, mentioned by the Apostle Matthew, as seen after Christ's resurrection : and Dr. Carpenter has even gone so far as to instance modern "spiritualism," as illustrating the manner in which Christ's followers may have been deluded into a belief of His Resurrection.

The circumstances, however, were altogether different, and the conditions of mind wholly unfavourable to such a theory. The Apostles were not men predisposed to be the subjects of delusion on this point, they had abandoned all hope of their Messiah, they had no expectation of His re-appearance, they were unwilling to believe the testimony of those who affirmed they had seen Him, and when He did appear to them they were affrighted, and needed that He should give them ocular demonstration that He was not a spirit, by performing in their presence the most ordinary bodily function of eating. Moreover, it is not the case of one or two "crazy fanatics," imagining they had seen a risen Christ, and then "communicating their enthusiasm to the rest." The accounts given

are of *many* distinct appearances, not to single individuals only, but to *all* the Apostles assembled together, and that more than once, and to no less than *five hundred* disciples at one time; and the record of these manifestations is continued in letters, whose authenticity is recognized even by unbelievers, and whose historical value we cannot overrate, letters written for the express purpose of being publicly read in places where the writer had many enemies, and written too of facts professedly occurring within living memory.

Now it is evident that the Church was organized upon the belief of Christ's Resurrection, that the Apostles and early Christians were fully persuaded of it, that but for this persuasion in its belief Christianity would never have been perpetuated, and that but for the same belief now it would soon come to an end. Of all this there can be no room for doubt. Will our opponents produce cause to show why we should not maintain the same belief? Will they produce any other adequate cause to account for the existence and continuance of the Church of Christ? Without the miracle of the

Resurrection, that Church would be a miracle almost greater, and the one is the proof of the other, while both alike are an evidence of that which is urged in these pages, that Christ is indeed Divine.



CHAPTER X.

THE BEARING ON ALL THESE OF THE LIFE
OF CHRIST.

HIS will be a fitting place to notice the strong argument which is furnished by the bearing of the character and life of Christ not only on His teachings and miracles, but also on some other important points, as affecting His Deity.

There can be no doubt that the life of Jesus has much to do with the very spread of infidelity, that it can account for the rejection of some, and the open hostility of others. His life is so opposed to their life, so exalted above it, that some have even gone so far as to question whether there was ever any Christ at all, and to regard Him only as a myth. If He had been more political and less particular, if His religion had been more formal and less conscientious, they would have been more

willing to listen to His claims, but "the spotless life, the soul-searching precepts, and the all-pervading claims" of Christ stir up an opposition which has its real origin in themselves. His person, His teachings, His claims are all opposed to their own manner of life, and only excite hostility.

Or, if we turn in an opposite direction, we find men, equally opposed to Christ's highest claims, utterly staggered by the lustre of His life. They cannot shut their eyes to His presence and influence in the world to-day, they cannot withhold their admiration of His marvellous and beautiful character, and such admissions as that of Strauss, previously quoted, are frequent enough. But all this is confined to the theme of Christ's life, beyond this they do not go, they refuse to be saved by the merits of another, and while with the one hand they build up the Deity of Christ by the very argument of "a life which is itself a miracle and nothing less than Divine," they pull it down in every possible way with the other. Thus they are inconsistent with themselves, and while we pity

their dissatisfaction, we rejoice in the confirmation which it affords, that "there is no place of rest between Atheism and the cordial acceptance of Jesus Christ" as the Atoning and Divine Saviour.

A belief in the *Gospels* themselves is similarly affected. The argument is thus stated—There are the gospels, and they must be accounted for. That they belong to the most remote times even those who refuse to believe them are compelled to admit, but how came they to be written in the times to which they confessedly belong? The moment sceptics begin to think, they find themselves in difficulties. The age to which the life of JESUS belongs was notoriously profligate and corrupt, the race from which it sprung was the most bigoted and exclusive the world has ever known, and yet here is a character and here are teachings "full of a purity and a beauty which His friends can never sufficiently admire, and His enemies have never dared to gainsay, and which command the admiration of the whole world." The Jewish race and the Christian era, it has been pointed out, could not possibly have invented such a person as Christ.

or such a life as His, and while unbelievers are filled with confusion at their own lame attempts to bring down the Gospels to a lower age, we point triumphantly to the bearing of Christ's life and character upon the Gospels, as proving them to be of higher than human origin.

The same argument applies to the *teachings* of Christ. Men are always likely to couple a man's example with his precepts, and indeed to judge very much of his precepts by his example, and this is the case with Jesus. His perfect life has given such weight to His teachings that one infidel writer refers to Him as "the one great example of human virtue, the one divinely wise and divinely appointed teacher of mankind;" His life is said to be "the perfect model which every suffering soul will contemplate as a source of strength and consolation." Speaking of the conversation with the woman by the well, Renan says, "On that day He was indeed the Son of God; His religion that day was not merely the religion adapted to man, it was the absolute religion, and humanity will return to those words of Jesus as the immortal

expression of its faith and hopes." Now, we ask, is it not strange that men who talk thus do not see the "force and drift" of their own admissions? Jesus stands out as the one only perfect man, whose life and teachings perfectly agree, and are both models. How happens it that only one such man has ever lived, if indeed He be only a man? No other such life ever bore on such teachings before, as did that of Jesus Christ, and why? Because no such man ever before lived, because as the author of the *Vie de Jésus* himself admits—He was indeed the Son of God.

Now let us consider the *miracles* of Christ in the same light. And here observe that to believe in the dispensation of Christianity and yet reject miracles, is to go in opposition to the whole order of nature. "All the great chapters of Nature's history," says Professor Hitchcock, "begin with miracles, and if the Christian dispensation were destitute of them, it would be out of harmony with the course of things in the natural world." We will not dwell here again upon the evidences of miracles, the fact that they are in harmony with

Christ's acknowledged character and mission, or that they are attested by witnesses who sealed their testimony with their blood. All we say is, that the life of JESUS requires and guarantees the exercise of miracles, and that the "superhuman life and superhuman teachings of the wonderful Christ" are evidence in themselves in favor of miracles. Here in the Gospels we have the history of them. Are they fictions? The history will not admit of that. But we are told they are "deceptions and illusions to which with the best intentions Jesus was a party."!

Now we say that it is far easier to believe in the miracles, than it is to believe that a Being so wise, so holy, so good, and so truthful as Christ was, that a Being who lived such a perfect life (as sceptics themselves admit He did) should have permitted or countenanced anything like deception. Thus His very life has a most important bearing on His miracles, and in confirming them, confirms the evidence they furnish of His Divinity.

Further, admitting that Christ lived as an example, and bearing in mind the purity and holiness and unselfishness of that life, can we go further

and say that Christ died as our example? Men talk, as of something horrible, about "the awful idea" of God's acceptance of the sufferings of His own Son as an atonement for mankind, but does it not seem an equally "horrible and awful" thing, that (if the death of Christ be of no commensurate service to man) the wrath of God should utterly overwhelm and destroy the only sinless Being whom the world has ever known? Or shall we fall back on the teaching of our modern theorists that Jesus was "tired of life and afraid of living any longer lest His beautiful character should be marred"? The whole life of Jesus is opposed to such an idea. We must accept His death in the full light and teaching of His life, and unless we accept it as an atoning sacrifice, it becomes a far more inexplicable mystery, and far more out of harmony with His character, and teachings, and declared mission, than if we believe, what we are driven to believe, that He died voluntarily as our substitute, according to His own showing, and to do this to any purpose He could not have been a mere man, He must have been also God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ADAPTATION OF CHRIST TO HUMAN NEEDS.



HE marvellous manner in which Christ is adapted to meet the world's wants and woes, to satisfy its needs and its yearnings, is another argument of no inconsiderable force. It is fairly argued, "if we find light existing, and an eye adapted to see in the light, and objects round us which, when the light is on them, the eye can see; then we naturally conclude that the whole arrangement has had a common origin, and that He who made the light made also the eye, and the world on which the eye gazes;" and this applies to Christ and the great human want of all ages and climes.

For in all ages the world has had a longing, however faint and ill-defined, which Christ alone has been able to satisfy. It is only necessary to know the writings of the ancients, and the lives of

some of their most eminent thinkers, both Western and Oriental, to admit that the soul of man, in some of its loftiest aspirations, and amid the perplexities involved in the reconciliation of human guilt and need with the highest conceptions of Deity, has been able (we do not say independently of Revelation, but certainly of the Christian Revelation) to lay hold of the idea of the atonement, and so too modern missionary records testify: "Earnest, truth-searching minds and cultivated consciences, as soon as they hear of Christ being the world's atonement, eagerly look up to Him and embrace Him."

Herein lies the power of Christ, and the proof of His superhuman being. He is Himself the only remedy of universal application. Mediation has been a felt need, and the soul of man has ever had an indefinable longing for satisfaction, rest, and love; Christ comes through the world, and as He passes by He reveals in Himself to its admiring gaze all that is needful to satisfy the requirements of the Deity, to meet the necessities of the world, and by the very union of the two natures in Him-

self to link man with his Creator. And is it not this very two-fold nature of Jesus which commends Him to the mind of man? The majesty, and wisdom, and power of Deity, sweetly shrouded and tempered by all the attractions and loveliness of the most beautiful humanity; so that while we revere Him as God, we fondly love Him as man; awe and affection are happily combined; able as God to save us to the uttermost, able as man to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, He draws to Himself the hearts of men by the silent resistless magnetism of His power to satisfy all their yearning and need.

The freedom of the will is an attribute of man which betokens his Divine origin, so that he is not governed by the law of instinct, which he shares in common with the animal creation, but is superior to it, and directs it. This freedom of will none can rob him of, though he himself may surrender it; in the exercise of it he may even defy his God. Another faculty of the human soul is the power of judgment, the ability to reason out, and compare, and weigh in the mind the things

which he knows. To both these grand faculties in man Christ appeals. He is never found, in distinction from the mass of the world's teachers and guides, dealing with men either as machines or as children ; two characteristics mark His teaching, He supplies truth and leaves it with men to accept or reject it. He recognizes the freedom of man's will and appeals to their reason and sense of right, and it is in thus dealing with men, never forgetting their manhood, that He meets them and wins them because He meets and satisfies these higher faculties.

The love of liberty is so deeply implanted in mankind, that there is scarcely anything of which men will bear the loss less readily. Service, taxation, oppression will be endured, but if its liberties be assailed, a nation will be stirred to its very heart, and provoked to rebellion and bloodshed, it will rise up as one man in all the strength of its manhood, and assert its right and its power to be free.

Now to this instinct in man's being Christ especially commends Himself. Sprung from the

people, earning His livelihood as a mechanic, associating freely with rich and poor alike, fearlessly speaking out the truths He held, manfully exposing the oppressions and hypocrisies of rulers, tenderly compassionating and helping the down-trodden masses of the people, despised, hated and vilified by those in high places, the victim of their persecution and cruelty, and finally put to death by the ruling powers, aided by the soldiery of a foreign tyranny, Jesus stood out then as He stands before the world now, on the side of the people against all that is subversive of their liberties. And as in Himself so in His teachings. The value of each human soul to the Creator, the equality of all men in His sight, man's personal responsibility, the fitness of every man to hear and receive the Gospel, the dignity of labor and of suffering, respect for women, love and care of children, these are among the doctrines which Jesus has given to the world, and which have done more than anything else to promote true liberty, endearing Him to mankind as One who is most true to their noblest and strongest instincts.

Practical benevolence is a virtue which always appeals at once to man's understanding and heart. A manly independent spirit of self-help, and a ready willingness to help others are among the strongly marked features of a nation or an individual, which augur well for the future, and men will never be long the adherents of a religion which does not show itself in practical goodness. The benevolent efforts called forth by the wars, and famines, and catastrophes of a single decade, have furnished the most pleasing and satisfactory evidences that the religion of the age is vital, because it is practical. And that the benevolence then evoked was not the result of a mere fitful impulse of generous sympathy, is shown in the wide-spread and liberal support of all the noble and charitable Institutions, which are the glory and blessing of *any* land. Now we regard these things as the fruit of Christ's example and teaching, we go back to the days before the gentle influence of the loving Christ really "softened men's minds and manners," and look in vain for anything like our Asylums and Orphanages, Hospitals and Infirm-

aries, Personal and Educational Charities. They are the natural outgrowth and the legitimate fruit of a deep rooted Christianity, reminding us of the wondrous tree in Eastern story, on which grew golden apples and silver bells, and every time the breeze went by and tossed the fragrant branches, the living bells, they chimed and uttered sweet music, and a shower of the golden apples fell. Herein it is that Christianity embraces in itself such a Divine element of existence as can never die out, and nothing can ever extinguish. Its real security, its vitality and its triumph are to be sought for not in its alliance with power, or wealth, or learning, but in its "benevolent morality"—in this, that the motto of all its moral teaching is "Good-will to man."

The world has at least awaked to the consciousness that the sum of all goodness is in Christ, even His enemies being the Judges: and the good which He did has prepared men to receive the good which He taught. In their deepest yearnings, their loftiest aspirations, their holiest strivings after goodness, they turn involuntarily to the

perfect Christ. Beyond Him no ideal can go, and in Him as the impersonation of benevolence are satisfied the highest conceptions and the deepest longings of man.

The craving of the soul for personal friendship is inherent in every true man. It underlies a large amount of the happiness and of the misery of mankind. It is the secret of many a mystery in the reading of men's lives, and has been the hidden or the open cause of dark and terrible, as well as of bright, and noble, and heroic deeds. This craving not seldom finds no satisfaction among men. A Divine Christ, one who "liveth, though He was dead," capable though unseen of making His presence felt, knowing the worst about us, yet opening His heart to receive us, acquainted with our disposition, temperament, habits of thought and life, circumstances, temptations, aspirations, efforts and failures, and offering to us the noblest, purest and most intimate friendship, this is the Christ of the Gospels, and we altogether fail to realize what He was—to His mother, to S. John, to Lazarus and the Bethany

sisters—and what He is capable of becoming to *every* man, until we have welcomed Him into our hearts and homes as a Friend, who in the fullest, grandest sense can satisfy the most eager longings of the soul for Personal Friendship.

And here again Christ satisfies a great human want. The world, the life of each one, the life of each revolving day or hour, is like a kaleidoscope, each turn of it bringing change. It is the lesson of nature with its changing seasons, varying skies, and never quiet ocean, and it is the teaching of experience and especially of that of human friendship. As the order and harmony of the solar system are derived by the laws of force and gravitation from a fixed centre, so the thoughts, and aspirations, and affections of men can only be brought into order and harmony by the same means. In the universe of souls that fixed centre is Christ. Now whether we regard friendship from a subjective or objective point of view, a Divine Christ, in the unchangeableness of His character, and in His power of attraction, supplies just that which man requires, both objectively and sub-

jectively, to satisfy his deepest needs, and by which he is constrained to realize in Christ far more than human friendship is able to afford.

Sadness is an element in human life which is universal. It is called "the poetry of fallen creation." All things are pensive and sad. Real sorrow always begets reverence and attention, and finds out the best and tenderest in men that are true. Nature too has her sad moods, and they seldom fail to find a response in the human spirit. "All art," it is said, "is sorrowful, sorrow is its one-sidedness. Shakspeare was greatest when he wrote tragedies, and art never gets beyond though it may sink below this. No poetry ever finds its way to a nation's heart, unless it have the burden of sorrow in it; it is the same with sculpture, and it is the same with painting." To the thoughtful and the feeling there is perhaps no mystery in human life so great, so overwhelming, so sad as the misery of it. "A broken heart lurks often beneath the folds of a bridal veil." Hidden undercurrents often whirl tempestuously concealed beneath a calm surface, and many a smiling face

only serves to hide an aching heart. The "tense tight features, the shadows on the countenance, the wrinkled brow, the fading eyes, the heavy, inelastic step, the hair turning white before its time," these tell the tale too plainly, of weariness, fretting like a moth the outer garment of the soul —of sadness, eating like a worm at the very core of the heart. Ruskin tells us that the world is growing sadder, and one in the sadness of poetry asks,—

O! into what bosom, I wonder,
Is poured the whole sorrow of years?
For eternity only seems keeping
Account of the great human weeping.

Now with this element in human life Christ marvellously combines. His mission is to the sad and the sorrowful. The "Man of sorrows" cannot be understood by those into whose nature sorrow and sadness have not entered. His life fails to be appreciated by those who are strangers to sadness, and loneliness, and weariness. The weary mind, the aching heart, the burdened conscience, these turn instinctively to the once sad and suffering Christ; and He meets and satisfies

them, even the burdened conscience, by virtue not only of His sad and suffering Manhood, but also of His atoning and all-sufficient Godhead. HIS is the "bosom" into which "is poured the whole sorrow of years," and the very sadness of the world is the chord in its heart, which can be reached, and is thrilled, by the touch of the sympathy of Christ.

In this is discovered the deep philosophy of the Cross. Modern writers, English and Continental, treat us to their theories about the essence and abstract Being of God, but abstract ideas about God and truth will never fill men with that veneration and love of the Deity, which a contemplation of the sacrifice of Christ seldom fails to accomplish. Exceptions there may be, but men generally cannot be satisfied with theories and abstractions ;

We are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries,

and men need something tangible, they cannot do without some image presented before the mind. To this Macaulay traces "the strong tendency of

the masses in all ages and nations to idolatry." We are reminded that the Greeks at first worshipped one invisible deity, and that afterwards, of one city it was said—there were as many gods as men in it. Jewish history presents a constant struggle between the worship of the one uncreated, invisible, incomprehensible God, and the natural tendency to put ideas of God into some form or image.

Now here is a great human craving, and Christianity meets it, for it brings God before us in human form, it points us to the sufferer on the Cross, and appeals to us by the "precious blood" of Christ. Gibbon has drawn attention to the fact that while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, Christianity rapidly spread over the world. Macaulay refers to the same thing. Gibbon however fails to give an adequate cause. It is not enough to be told that "the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the Portico, and the fasces of the Lictor, and the swords of thirty legions were all humbled in the dust before Christianity"; we need

to be reminded, that it was "before Deity, embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, and bleeding on the Cross."

One of our most gifted poets has described solitude as the loneliness of a stranger in the heart of a great city, and oh! how much of loneliness there is in life! In the round of daily duties, in the endearments of the home circle, in the din of the busy crowd, and yet alone! the loneliness of a lofty spirit with high resolves and noble unselfish purposes, of a mind rightly balanced and fully informed, of a heart set upon goodness and piety and full of some grand scheme of benevolence and usefulness, in the midst of those who are ignorant and prejudiced and self-seeking and narrow and earth-bound. To all such there is in the life of Jesus an element in deepest sympathy with their own solitariness. In Christ was Light uncomprehended by surrounding darkness, Virtue pursuing its lonely way face to face with Vice, a soul filled to overflowing with the desire for God's glory but finding

none to share it, a mind centred in its benevolence on the welfare of mankind but meeting with no response, a heart bursting with grief and sadness for the sins and sorrows of the human family, into which He had been born a brother, but alone in its yearning solicitude; and all this accumulating with advancing years, as His contact with man and His experience of sin became greater and more painful, in the utter want of sympathy, the utter, utter loneliness. And by this experience Christ appeals to the myriads of the lonely hearts in the world to-day, as none other ever did, or ever can.

Man is a complex being, mental, moral, and spiritual, and his perfect manhood and happiness depend upon the entire satisfaction of his needs, mentally morally and spiritually. That the mind may possess great powers, be highly educated and even refined, and yet the moral character be depraved and debased, History and Experience furnish too many saddening proofs; while a high standard of morality is perfectly possible with a very low estimate and a very little knowledge of

the highest spiritual realities, as in some of the ancients, and in more among the moderns.

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that education is to set the world right. Are we to suppose that Egypt and Greece and Rome could not boast of highly educated minds or, admitting it, do we find that education satisfied the need of their moral or spiritual being? Socrates and Plato and Aristotle must sit at the feet of many a little child among us to learn, without vagueness or uncertainty, ideas about God, and truth, and virtue, and life and death, and the soul, and futurity. The training of the mind, development of thought, the pursuit of literature, speculative problems, scientific research, these do not bring men necessarily nearer to God, nor win them to a life of holiness. This Christ does.

Nature speaks to man as a creature capable of awe and admiration, of gratitude and love, of employment and pleasure; she teaches much and we might all study her pages with profit, but in vain the thoughtful Hindoo, or the clever Chinese, or the child of nature among the wilds of Africa shall

look to her for the clear apprehension of Him who is a Just God and a Saviour; Helicon's fount has never inspired men to tell of a fountain for the cleansing of the conscience; the Southern Cross has never taught astronomer, or savage, salvation through an Atonement; written in lines of light and beauty on her pages Nature displays the attributes of Deity, but she does not tell us how they may be reconciled.

Christ addresses man as an intellectual, a responsible, a sinful being. Contact with Jesus affects and elevates his whole nature; his intellectual faculties, however fettered and cramped and crippled, are freed enlightened and enlarged by the teaching to which he listens, his moral consciousness is awakened, corrected, stimulated by the example which he contemplates, his conscience is regulated by the revelation in Christ of the highest spiritual truths, and set at rest by the perfect adaptation of Christ's substitution and Atonement to satisfy all its requirements.

Man yearns after a knowledge of the future. From the Vanhalla of the Northman to the hunting

grounds of the Red Indian these yearnings are embodied in the strangest, wildest, most fantastic forms, but they all show how for a thorough adaptation to the wants of man's nature Christ must be more than a Teacher of the most perfect system of ethics, more than the manifestation, however bright, of purity and peace and good-will, He must bring with Him the light of another world that shall chase away the Great Shadow of the unknown Future from the human spirit; and in this Christ stands alone, the only man of all the race, the only Teacher through all the ages, who can satisfy the cravings of the immortal in man, and that not merely by the revelation He discloses, but because He is Himself "the Resurrection and the Life."

And it is not merely to Christianity as a system that the heart of the world turns, but to Christ. Men are weary to-day of the burdens imposed on them in the name of religion. Ecclesiastical intolerance, narrow creed, party spirit, sectarian prejudice, conflicting interpretations of the same Scripture, conflicting opinions about forms and ceremonies, and the very opposite of these, Atheism,

Positivism, Scepticism, and every form of Rationalism are all preparing men's minds to turn away from so much that is unsatisfying to Christ.

In this peculiar and perfect adaptation to meet all that man's highest nature and necessities require lies a strong evidence of the Divine fulness which belongs to Christ. Of no mere man could it be said that he satisfies all the needs of a human soul, but there are at this moment millions of living men ready to testify that they find fullest satisfaction in Christ,—in Christ their Friend and Brother, their Saviour and their God.



CHAPTER XII.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST UPON MANKIND.



AFTER the lapse of nearly nineteen centuries, the name of Christ holds the foremost place amongst the most renowned and revered of men, and at this very moment there is not one upon earth who can for a single instant compare with Him in the influence and the power which He exercises over mankind.

Reviewing the last five chapters, and remembering that they give but the barest digest of that to which as many volumes would fail to do justice, who can wonder at this power of Christ?

We all know the power of sympathy, that spiritual magnetism which passing from man to man makes two hearts one, links a whole circle, pervades an assembly of thousands, causes an entire nation to spring to its feet as one man; that golden thread which binds all men together: that

“touch” of human nature which “makes the whole world kin;” that indescribable something which, though it may sparkle in the eye, or glisten in the tear, or tremble in the voice, is yet more felt than seen or heard.

And this power Christ possesses by virtue of His perfect manhood. He is no cold statue-like embodiment of the beauty of holiness, so immeasurably beyond us as to be incapable of entering into our human experience; instead of being awed and repelled by the distance, we are attracted and won by the wondrous nearness. Here is a man like ourselves, with the same bodily system, the same human soul, capable of emotion, susceptible of pain and grief and pleasure and joy, acquainted with hunger and thirst and weariness, with labor and poverty and sickness and temptation and suffering; and to all this experience in their sorest distress and need men turn as they turn nowhere else.

In nature we find that some of the most quiet and gentle things are among her mightiest forces; the Light for instance so swift and yet so soft, so silent and yet so strong; the still small rain, so

gentle and yet so potent; the marvellous energy of the gently rising sap, or of the gently falling dew. And is it not so among men? Other things being equal, how resistless is the influence exerted by a quiet gentle spirit, by an easy placid gentle manner, and by calm and gentle words. Even so "the gentleness of Jesus" is a mighty element of His power over the hearts of men. To Him, who, while meeting His adversaries boldly and energetically, and not shrinking from speaking out the plain unvarnished truth, never indulged in loud tones or angry words or bitter recriminations; who gently bore with the ignorance and dulness of apprehension of men who failed to appreciate Him, and often misunderstood and contradicted Him; who to the woman by the well of Samaria, to the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane, and to the penitent apostle on the shore of Tiberias displayed such unspeakable, such gentle forbearance; who was so gentle and tender to His mother, to the suffering and sorrowing, and to the little children; to Him men and women and children all turn from the anger and harshness and severity of a rough and heartless world.

"Sorrow," says the great and good Bishop Butler, "is a holy and venerable thing, the relic of Christ in the world, an image of the Great Sufferer, a shadow of the Cross." Perhaps the two most pathetic words that ever recorded an earthly fact are those in which the sacred historian tells us "Jesus wept." Chrysostom, that great Father of the Early Church, tells us that in his days some weak and injudicious Christians were so rash as to strike out these words, from an idea that it was unsuitable and unbecoming in the Son of God to weep! Little did they think how after fifteen hundred years these words would exert a greater power than ever over mankind. He who divided the Gospel into verses did well to place these two words by themselves, and doubtless did it to draw attention to the sacredness of earthly friendship, the honorableness of human grief and tears, and the depth of Christ's sorrow. And it is in His sorrow lies His power in a sorrowful world, and by His right to claim the title of "man of sorrows" He rightly exercises as no other man a power over sorrowing men. There is possibly more

of fact than fiction in the words of a supposed letter of the Roman Governor Lentulus, "It cannot be remembered that any have seen Him laugh, but many have seen Him weep"—they are at least in accord with the life of One who was bruised and wounded in heart. "Some flowers" we are told "must be broken or bruised before they emit any fragrance," and it is the fragrance of Christ's sorrows wafted down all the ages which captivates men to-day; from the bruised broken heart of Christ there has gone forth virtue whose power, as men experience it, they recognize and own to be Divine.

It is the man who is burdened with sorrow, but it is the God who alleviates it; it is the man who weeps over his buried friend, but it is the God who raises him to life again; it is the man who dies on the cross, but it is the God who promises pardon and Paradise to the thief at His side.

The force of example is a proverb. Theories, and principles and precepts may be very perfect, very beautiful, commend themselves very powerfully, but it is the working out of a theory, the

embodiment of principles and precepts in a life, which exerts any forcible or lasting influence upon men, and not mere abstractions however beautiful or good. In this lies the power of Christ; He is no abstraction, His life of faith and patience, love and purity, is a wondrous and beautiful reality, and its power lies greatly in the fact that it was a man who lived this perfect life, bringing it within the possibility of imitation, and stimulating men to copy it. Wise and upright have been many of the world's teachers, Plato has his admirers and Confucius his followers to-day, but whenever were men inspired, as for nearly two thousand years countless millions have been inspired, to a life of holiness and love and heroic self-sacrifice by the example of a single man? In this Christ stands alone, just as His perfect life stands alone.

The wonderful adaptation of Christ to the wants of man's nature under such different conditions of life, such social inequalities, such varieties of mental power and disposition and experience, is moreover at once the evidence and the source of that power which Christ exercises over men. To Him

alike the sick sufferer on his humble couch, or the beloved Queen who sits and reads by his side, the statesman, the philosopher, the warrior, a Milton, a Newton, a Washington, a Havelock, the man of letters or the unlearned, the polished European or the islander of the Malay Archipelago, shall turn, and find in Him the satisfaction of their loftiest aspirations and of their deepest needs.

There can be no denying that Christ has produced a social revolution in the world, that the nations of the earth to-day are walking in the light and liberty and civilization which they derive from the influence of His life and teaching, that their laws and customs and the moral sanctions which hold society together are more or less due to the power of Christ as a mighty factor in the sum of the world's daily life. Let not England's sons and daughters forget that to the influence of Christ upon her political and social life, she owes her noblest charters of liberty, and her most glorious institutions of mercy.

In the lives of individuals, again, the evidences of Christ's power are as striking as they are nu-

merous. The marvellous changes that are wrought, the heroism that is induced, the self-sacrifice that is begotten, the deeds of love and piety that are prompted, the life of purity that is attained, the self-conquest that is achieved, these things must be fairly recognized. In estimating the power of Christ, in all fairness due consideration must be given to that widespread and mysterious influence, which is felt by so large a portion of mankind in connection with a personal attachment to Christ; it is a phenomenon in the history of the human race, not confined to one period, nor to one place, nor to the experience of a few, nor does it occur in connection with any other Person in the world's history. It is idle to dismiss it as a sentiment, or to connect it with priestcraft; sentiment does not fight and struggle and suffer and survive and gain strength through two thousand years, and this experience of the human heart springs up and is perpetuated independently of and even in opposition to priestly power.

And now how is all this power of Christ over mankind to be accounted for? It cannot pass

unnoticed. Men may challenge it, but they cannot shut their eyes to it. The very hold which Christianity has taken upon the language and literature, the minds and thoughts of men, their civilization and daily life, their laws and usages, prevents that. They may question Christ, may deny His Deity, may reject His claims, but they cannot ignore Him.

Men say "This Jesus, who, you tell us, is God, and will judge the world, is no more than a man. His authority is nothing, He will never judge the world. He is nothing to us," but they cannot let Him alone, they cannot rest satisfied with their own rejection of Him, they must be ever troubling and vexing themselves in their ceaseless efforts to account for Him, but account for Him they cannot. His Divine excellence, His human life, His Incarnation, His Death, His Resurrection, His influence on the world and on the human heart, present a majesty and a mystery by which they are baffled, while they endeavour to account for Christ on merely human grounds.

"Is it only a coincidence" it has been well asked

“only a happy succession of accidents that have combined to make the name of Jesus what it is? the watchword in a million of polemic warfares, adored by hermits in every wilderness, in a million cloisters and caves and convents, the word of a thousand rival creeds, all hoping salvation through Him, the last word murmured with the incense-breath of a million million of martyrs and outcasts and dying, the aspiration of a million million of hearts, the mark on the fine linen of highest holiest truths, the name giving to festivity a reason, to pity a power, to piety its crown, and to holiness its reality and its hope; is it all coincidence? Why, it would be madness to believe it.”

And we may not lose sight of the power in the world which the death of Christ is. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the one great central fact by which the eyes of the human race all these years have been fastened on Christ. This one death has produced effects upon the world so vast, so wide-spread, so continuous, that we fail to realize the “civilizations it has created, the societies it has moulded, the histories it has written in living

deeds, the deaths it has freed from fear, the lives it has animated and made holy." But why *this* death more than any other death? more than the death of other virtuous and innocent men who have been ruthlessly slain, of other unselfish and philanthropic men who have sacrificed their lives for the general good, of other noble martyrs for the truths they taught?

To this and to all similar inquiries as to the life as well as the death of Christ, there is but one satisfactory reply, and every attempt to reply otherwise must inevitably fail, because it fails to lift the mind to an adequate conception of Christ, and this is the reply, that Christ is not only man, He is also God.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

THE power of Christ in the world to-day is such indeed that we are constrained to reckon Him among its Monarchs, and to acknowledge the greatness of His Kingdom. Literally the last known descendant of an ancient Royal house, and the rightful king of a now dispersed people, Christ is at this moment at the head of an Empire more vast and powerful than that of any which has ever existed among men. Little did Jews or Romans dream of the solemn truth veiled under their words of mockery. Pilate knew not how he was writing history for all time when he set up over Jesus the title of King.

Who could then have suspected, when the Roman Empire was world-wide, its foundations broad and deep, its fabric strong, its glory almost at its zenith, that in that crucified One lay the

hidden power which was to become mightier than that of Imperial Cæsar, and to survive it? And yet now, while the Jews are a people scattered over the face of all lands, and the Imperial purple is a faded glory, the kingdom of Christ is a great fact in the earth.

For Christianity is not merely a splendid theory, or a grand code of laws, a wonderful revelation or a prodigious moral force, it is a kingdom, and among all the kingdoms of the world there is none like it. Babylon and Media, Greece and Rome, where are those mighty Empires to-day? But age after age is adding to the kingdom of Christ, we see it "peopling America and Europe, spreading its colonies in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and all the Archipelagos of the sea, embracing the most favoured portion of the inhabitants of the globe, and exercising undivided sway everywhere in virtue of its moral and material superiority," so that in the power exerted over mankind, an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Napoleon, are not to be compared with Christ, nor has any kingdom ever exerted such influence in the world as His.

It is not enough to say with Cardinal Manning that it "issued from the Catacombs, and vaulted into the throne of the Cæsars"; it sways its sceptre in every council chamber and in every senate of the civilized world, it regulates our social institutions, our laws and commerce: in its nature and origin, its matchless laws, its immeasurable power, its innumerable subjects, its irresistible progress, and its illimitable extent, it is as unlike as it is above all other kingdoms.

A temporal power it is, but its might is spiritual. It is independent of princes and warriors and the strong arm of the law; it borrows not its splendour from thrones or palaces, or regalia or pomp or show; it has no armies or fleets, no iron-clads or Armstrongs; it has laws, but they are for men's minds and hearts as well as for their lives; it has a King, but He is not of this world, and His kingdom is not the mere spread of His name or the recognition of His claims, but the personal love of His people and His reign in their hearts.

The *Republic* of Plato has many attractions for nineteenth century Utopians, but neither in it nor

in any of the systems of ancient or modern philosophers, can be found such a code of morality or such a charter of rights and liberties, as the statute book of Christ's kingdom contains. The laws of Draco were written in blood, the laws of Lycurgus breathed cruelty and falsehood, the laws of Solon permitted licentiousness, but the laws of Christ breathe the spirit of truth and purity and love, and, in their pure light, Brahma and Buddha, and even Confucius must blush. "Christianity" says Gibbon "diffuses among the people a pure, benevolent and universal system of ethics, adapted to every condition of life."

The laws of Christ are opposed to the tyranny and pride and selfishness of men, they are the true enfranchisers of the people, they underlie and embrace all that which is best and noblest in our national life. In the days of the Empires of gold and silver and brass and iron, when Christ exerted no influence in the civilization of the nations, what was the provision made for the widow and the orphan, the infirm, the injured and the diseased? where were the Hospitals, the Infirmaries, the

Alms-houses, the Unions, the Orphanages, the Homes for the poor and the outcast, the fatherless and the suffering? Let African savagery, and Chinese pitilessness, and Hindoo stoicism furnish the dark background of infanticide, desertion of the aged, exposure of the sick and dying on river-banks or in the streets, and other cruel customs, only to make more splendid the compassionate character of that kingdom of Christ whose laws of justice, liberty and mercy tend to the amelioration of the human race. Napoleon in his island prison is reported to have said, "Now that I am fastened down upon this rock, who fights my battles and conquers Empires for me? where are the courtiers of my misfortunes? Do men think of me? . . . Jesus Christ *founded an empire upon love*, and at this moment millions of men would die for Him."

And to whom does this kingdom owe its origin, to what founder, or founders? A young man, of obscure parentage and from an ill-reputed town, at work as a carpenter with His supposed father, reaches the age of thirty, and then for a brief

period of three years comes before His countrymen in a remote and insignificant province. Born in a stable, suckled in a desert, nursed in a foreign land, brought up in a workshop, He becomes the marvel of His age for the wisdom of His teaching, the perfection of His character, and the greatness of His miracles. He is vested with no authority, supported by no state, followed by no army, attended by no retinue, possessed of no treasury ; but a poor and sorrowful man, the butt of scorn, the victim of envy, an innocent sufferer ; He dies, and "the world has never been quite the same world since." To carry on the kingdom He had founded, He leaves behind Him a few rude and illiterate men of obscure and lowly origin, to all seeming the most unlikely persons to establish a system or kingdom which should one day exercise a world-wide influence, fishermen and publicans and their friends ; in all, when their leader was removed, but a mere handful of men. And yet it was through the agency of this little band that the world was "turned upside down" ; while for eighteen centuries "one Jew has subjected to his

mild yoke millions of souls out of every nation." Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Saxons, Celts, Slaves, Negroes, Hindoos, Chinese, Northmen, Islanders in all Seas acknowledge His authority and call Him King. In the contemplation of such a result, we may well adapt the inquiry of Wordsworth,

Can this be He who went to stray
A pilgrim on the world's highway,
Oppressed by power and mocked by pride,
The Nazarene, the Crucified ?

The kingdom of Christ in its progress is as unlike all other kingdoms, as its Founder is different from all earthly kings. Its real advance, like that of science and learning and art, is not distinguished by noise and display, but is made in comparative silence, and with steady gradual progress; the clamor and commotion arise from the opposition which it provokes, and from the removal of the obstacles which are placed in its pathway. That progress has been hindered and checked again and again, but it has always been triumphant in the end. Against the obstruction of kings and warriors and philosophers, of state-

craft and priestcraft, in the face of ignorance and superstition, prejudice and bigotry, hate and scorn and contumely, against sword, fire and torture, imprisonment and death, the kingdom of Christ in the majesty of its inherent force has made its way and grown and prospered, until at this day the banner of its king waves over nearly every land under Heaven. And if Mahomet is strong, and Buddh counts his followers by scores of millions, the latter has yet to sustain the shock of Christianity before which, like every other form of religion, it must inevitably give way, and the former carries in itself the seeds of weakness and decay. Shelley once wrote,

A power from the unknown God
A Promethean conqueror came,
Like a triumphal path He trod
The thorns of death and shame ;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set ;
While, blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon,
The Cross leads generations on.

Shelley was a prophet. Everywhere the Crescent at this day is waning, in India its power has been terribly crushed, and in its own land it bows before the rising glory of the Cross.

The kingdoms of the world, of Nimroud and the Pharaohs, of David even, of the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, of Charlemagne, of Mahomet, as of Napoleon and others, have been spread and maintained by the force of arms, by subjugation and conquest, but the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom not of war, but of peace ; not of the sword, but of the Gospel ; not of violence, but of righteousness and love ; it is a kingdom which has its seat in the wills and affections and lives of men.

Force then is utterly useless, for, although the human will may be strangely influenced, it can only be persuaded, it cannot be forced, like a spring it may be kept down, but the instant that the force is removed, it will assuredly rebound. No force will change the nature of things ; wire may be made into string, but the mineral does not become vegetable ; steam may give motion to the hammer, and cause it to strike, but the motion is not in the hammer ; Galvanism may move the lifeless limbs, but galvanism is not life. The idea of compulsion is opposed to the very genius of Christianity, and is utterly suicidal. It leads men to "kiss it with their lips and to stab it in the dark."

Even the old Romans saw the folly of employing force in the spread of religion, and adopted the policy of incorporating the gods of the nations they conquered with their own. And they who think that Christianity cannot stand alone, that left to itself it must fall before opposition or infidelity, fail to appreciate the character and vital energy, and forget the history, of Christ's kingdom. They forget how before the days of Constantine it triumphed over all its foes, how before a Christianity, undefended and unprotected by the state, the Grecian schools were confounded and the Roman temples were deserted, how a Nero, and a Diocletian, and a Julian, aided as they were by the bitterness of infidel writers, by the force of arms, and by all the craft of the cleverest policy, with all the resources of the Empire at their disposal, were powerless to overthrow, nay, were unable to cope with, this wondrous kingdom, alone in the majesty of its own inherent might.

And the kingdom of Christ has been sufficiently tested. During the development of eighteen centuries it has assumed various forms, it has been

full of excrescences, deformities and distortions, yet of these it might be shown that none was useless, the Papacy in opposing the armies of the Crescent and the barbarians of the North, Monasticism in preserving learning and art and piety amid ignorance and feudal oppression and social disruption, and even Scholasticism in educating the mind till it rebounded back to sounder knowledge and primitive doctrine. The power of Christ's kingdom is proved by its continuance, its youth appears to be renewing itself, eighteen hundred years is no slight test, and instead of being worn out or effete, it is spreading even wider and taking deeper root than ever it has done before; the kingdoms of science and art, of thought and civilization are of immensely wider range than hitherto, but the kingdom of Christ keeps pace with and embraces them all. The experiment has been tried on the largest possible scale, its operations have not been confined to certain countries or races or classes of men, and invariably the same effects have been produced, the same successful results have followed. It has survived all other

kingdoms, and there is none like it for power and extent in the world to-day.

Face to face with this kingdom in our own century, a kingdom founded so strangely eighteen centuries ago and full of strength and vigor to-day, so singular in its nature, so perfect in its laws, so majestic in its progress, so vast in its extent, how shall we attempt to account for it on mere human grounds? "I tell you," said Napoleon, "*that Jesus is not a man.* Here I die before my time, and my body will be given back, to the earth to become food for worms; such is the fate of the great Napoleon—but the kingdom of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, loved and adored, and extending over the whole earth." This witness is true—Jesus is not a mere man, and His kingdom proves it.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE UNACCOUNTABLENESS OF CHRIST AS ONLY MAN.

THE Gnosticism of other days has given place to the very opposite. The favorite theory of men to-day is the perfect humanity of Christ; not only that He was a real man, but that He was only a man. This is the sum and substance of many a *Life of Christ*. Take for example the *Vie de Jésus* of M. Renan. It is indeed a most dangerous book, for it has all the attraction of a picture with "all the affability and heartlessness and glitter of Paris"; to all other works of a like kind it is as the rainbow is to the mist, equally cold and equally unsubstantial, but more charming and deceitful; light and easy in style, with plenty of imagination and poetry, but setting out with a false idea that historical facts are not material, and that if they have weight we may "evolve from them our own view of

things," and running on in a strain of profound contempt for ordinary Christian belief.

Now in this and similar works, and in all the opinions and criticisms about Christ in which the age abounds, we have an evidence of His greatness. Men argue and criticize and write and enter into a crusade against Christ, and thereby prove the very thing they fain would annihilate. It is at least remarkable, even in an age when worldly wealth and honor are so highly esteemed, when travel and commerce so largely engross thought, when invention and science and art occupy the minds of men to such an unexampled degree, that the world should be more and more turning its thoughts Christward. About Christ are turning all the religious controversies, all the sceptical questions, all the storms of religious opinion, in which the scholar, the philosopher, the wit, the pulpit and the press take part. Not least remarkable are the closing words of the work just referred to, "Whatever may be the unexpected phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will constantly renew its youth; the tale of His

life will cause ceaseless tears ; His sufferings will soften the best hearts ; all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men, there is none born who is greater than Jesus." But what is it that has given rise to all these opinions and controversies which have vexed the Church and the world, and which have circled around Christ? Is it that men doubt His *existence*? "The proofs of the existence of the Roman Empire are far from equalling in number and value those of Jesus Christ"; written proofs, in heaps of early Christian documents, in decrees of councils, in inscriptions and dates on tombs, in the biographies of thousands of saints, in the works of theologians, apologists, controversialists, critics, poets, philosophers ; myriads of edifices of immense magnitude and cost, sculpture and painting, symbols and services ; crosses on mountain top or roadside, in cemeteries or dwellings, on the crowns of kings, on the breasts of soldiers, on the bosoms of maidens ; living proofs, in the hundreds of millions who worship and love and obey Him ; an overwhelming evidence to the great fact that the

story of Jesus is a veritable chapter in the world's history.

No, this is not the real point of attack. The most rigid tests of criticism have been applied to Him, to His character, His life, His teachings, the opinions of men respecting Him, the documents which perpetuate His name and memory, the actual experience of His people, but there is an ulterior purpose in it all. Men would be willing enough to let Jesus, *the man*, alone, if only His followers and admirers would abandon their belief in Him as God. It is against the *Deity* of Christ that all the assaults of criticism are prepared, and all the shafts of infidelity are hurled. "Around that Rock, in all directions lie the graveyards of Heretics and unbelievers of nearly two thousand years; here and there amid the crowd of graves and bones a solitary epitaph of some one more bold and presumptuous than his fellows, who has led on some new regiment, and displayed some new banner as a forlorn hope. But all has been in vain, and though millions of arrows have been hurled against the Rock, yet if they have touched it, they have fallen harmlessly by its side."

If only His followers did not make so much of Christ, His enemies would be more willing to let Him alone. When lately a well-known preacher was arraigned on a charge of teaching false doctrine, he brought forward in his defence this very point, and went so far as to maintain that many Christians are positively idolaters in their worship of Christ: that they so accustom themselves to think of Him, and look upon His character and work, that instead of leading them to the worship and love of God, He is set up as an idol, to come between God and the soul. Now of course if Christ be no more than human, this is perfectly just, but this is the very point at issue, and if He be God men cannot make too much of Him.

If He be only a man we say that He is simply unaccountable; Himself, His influence on the human heart, His influence on the progress of thought, His kingdom in the world to-day. Ever since His advent, men of every class of mind have employed all their powers of analysis and criticism, every possible hypothesis has been advanced, myth, imposture, delusion, but all to no purpose; every

attempt to explain Christ is a failure while it stops short of His Deity.

Place Him among men the most eminent for virtue. The justice of Aristides, the faithfulness of Achates, the piety of Æneas, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the zeal of Elijah, they all meet in Christ, and the verdict of men is—"Perfect."

Place Him among the foremost teachers and philosophers of any age. In Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, in Cato and Seneca and Pliny, in Confucius and Menu, there is ore of gold, but in Christ so fine is the gold, and so truly is it all gold, that the world continues to say of Him—never man spake like this man.

Place Him among workers of miracles. Let Vespasian and Mahomet, Ignatius Loyola and Xavier and others, be put to Leslie's celebrated crucial test, and scarcely will they satisfy two out of the four criteria, whereas, in the miracles of Christ, the majesty, the beneficence, the facility, the necessity, the number, the publicity, the record, constrain us to recognize the hand of God, and substantiate His claims to be Divine.

If heroism is the conquest of nations, the capture of strongholds, the destruction of cities, the slaughter of tens of thousands, then of course Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, and others like them bear away the palm ; but if true heroism be a noble courage, sacrificing self and braving danger and death in the cause of truth and virtue, and for the good of others, standing alone on the side of right, and enduring hatred, ignominy and persecution, for the sake of good one day to be recognized, then while men like Codrus, Leonidas, or Fabricius, are indeed heroes, Christ by the greatness of the cause for which He sacrificed Himself, by the greatness of the sacrifice of Himself which He made, and by the grandeur and lasting glory of the results He achieved, stands forth pre-eminently as the greatest hero the world has ever seen.

Find if you can in the world's history a dominion so extensive, or subjects so devoted, or a rule so beneficent, so just and yet so mild, and so enduring as that of Christ. Compared with Him what are the greatest among the world's lawgivers, Minos or Solon or Lycurgus or even Moses ? The Justinian

code has done much for the law of the land, but that of Christ is such as a Justinian could never have given, and it helped to shape the one he did give.

"*Euergetes*" became the title of the Ptolemies as benefactors, and "*Soter*" that of the Syrian kings as deliverers; names like those of Miltiades, Themistocles, and Epaminondas, of Camillus, Marcellus, Fabius and Scipio, emblazon the annals of Greece and Rome, Judæa glories in her Maccabæans, and from the Great Alfred to Washington liberators and patriots claim the reverence and affection of mankind; but, though Jesus headed no armies, fought no battles, drove out no invaders, liberated no nationalities, yet, in the civil, social, and religious liberty, which unquestionably He has given to the world, in the freedom of thought, in freedom from ignorance and superstition and passion and vice, He has achieved a greater, a more glorious, a more effectual, and a more lasting deliverance than any which mankind has experienced.

With such a picture as this before us, is it possible to "make too much" of Christ? Is it possible to account for Him upon simply human

grounds? Is it not indeed far more difficult to believe that this wonderful Christ was a mere man, than to believe that this man called Christ was also God? Is it any wonder that from the press, with a rapidity which is perfectly astonishing, there issue in every variety of form lives of Christ, some on the one side, some on the other, but all of them attempting to define Him, to estimate Him, to apprehend Him? Is it any wonder if in England and America, in France and Germany and India, the minds of the thoughtful and scholarly are exercised about this marvellous man? Shut their eyes to His living presence and power in the world they cannot, for Christ and His claims are making more stir than ever; those claims may be disputed, and the stir may be that of opposition, but it is all about Christ. Account for Him they cannot because they will not accept the only hypothesis upon which He can possibly be accounted for, and every fresh attack that they organize, every new infidel work that appears, is only leading onward thoughtful and earnest men to the conclusion, that to account for Christ we must accept Him not only as perfect man, but as perfect God.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE RECORD.

THE progress and triumphs of Christianity are of course unspeakably indebted to the agency of the records which the first Apostles and Evangelists have bequeathed. It should however be clearly understood that it does not owe its existence to the records, but that these spring out of the existence of Christ. The kingdom of Christ is as independent of any written history, as any other kingdom, although it could not in the nature of things exist, without creating a history. Such a history exists, professing to date from the foundation of the kingdom, and to describe the life and character of its founder, and to embody its laws. Now seeing that from this history we largely, though not entirely, derive our knowledge of the very character, teaching and miracles, which we call in evidence,

it would hardly be consistent to omit a brief consideration of the history itself.

Earnest unbelief is better than careless credulity, and betokens greater strength of mind. Unbelief, if it leads to investigation, is vastly preferable to a quiet easy way of taking everything for granted, without seriously weighing its credibility. Too ready a capacity of reception is generally associated with too little power for proper digestion, and lacks the discrimination whereby truth and error are distinguishable. Cavilling and captiousness on the other hand are equally to be deprecated, and to be unwilling to listen to argument, and to weigh evidence, betokens a want of candour. It is much to be regretted that so many who are opposed to the Gospels, act unfairly by them, and taking only a superficial view of the New Testament writings, reject them, without, in a manly, earnest and careful manner, deliberately and fully examining them.

The confession of Thomas Paine might have been to some extent also that of Hume, and certainly of many modern writers, "I had" he

says "neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both." It is always an easy matter to hold anything up to scorn and ridicule, and too many of the opponents of Christianity endeavour to laugh down, or ride rough shod over, that which in the records of Christ they cannot understand, and are unwilling to believe.

There is a little danger-cloud too springing up in another direction. Much is made of education in the present day, the wonders it has wrought, and its power to elevate the men and women of the coming generation. The age is one of extended knowledge, of cheap publications, of colleges and schools brought within the reach of the many; and the study of the arts and sciences, the discoveries and discussions of savants, the theories and speculations of our great leaders of thought, absorb the attention of men. Is there no danger lest the study of revelation should be neglected in the pursuit of natural science, lest art should shelve religion on one side, lest in the education of the mind men should lose sight of the necessity of educating the spiritual faculty in man as well?

The idea indeed is long exploded among all reasonable Christian men, that science and freedom of thought are opposed to Christianity, or likely to shake the credibility of the Gospels. We do not go to them for a knowledge of astronomy, to decipher the hieroglyphics of tree or flower, to read the records of the earth's strata, or to settle such questions as the origin of species, protoplasm, glacial periods, and solar influences. But we do go to them for what they profess to contain, a credible and authentic record of what Christ was, did, taught, and suffered, given by men who were competent to make it.

The historical worth of the record has been so mercilessly assailed century after century, that the newest arguments urged against it are but the old ones refurbished, while the strongest argument in its favor is that the record maintains its ground. Questioned as it has been in this and preceding ages, the witnesses of its faithfulness increase, while the charges of inaccuracy diminish, and the acquisitions of scholars, antiquarians, and travellers, all swell the ever-growing voice of a unanimous testimony to its historical accuracy.

Original manuscripts indeed are wanting, but so are those of the Commentaries of Cæsar or the Orations of Cicero, and we have copies of the translation of the New Testament into other languages older than any existing MSS. of these and other never disputed works ; we have quotations too so numerous that if, at the close of the third century, every copy of the New Testament in the world had been lost or destroyed, the whole could have been recovered, for it might all have been re-written from the works of friends and foes, with the exception, it is said, of about eleven verses.

In evidence that the Gospels belong to the age to which they are allotted, due consideration must be fairly given to the manifest simplicity and sincerity of the writers, as of their companions who believed in the same history, who in addition to their intelligence, candidness and good intention, were so deeply “impressed with the truth of what they wrote (or taught), and its vital necessity, that they suffered untold hardships, and cheerfully submitted to a shameful death, rather than recant

a single syllable of their glorious confession." Nor must the style of composition be overlooked, of which we are told that "Judæa could not have produced, in the second century, the compositions which we find in the New Testament," nor can we escape from the necessity of accepting the history as the only way in which to account for the changes wrought in the world avowedly by the Gospel, and traceable to no other cause, and *dating from the period* assigned to the Christian record.

That the Gospels have not been materially altered in their transmission to us may be gathered from the fact that they were early in public use, that they were soon variously translated, that there were always rivals and enemies only too eager to detect any alterations, and that they were held in the highest veneration. It may startle a novice to be told that one scholar has noted in the New Testament as many as 30,000 readings, and that another (Griesbach) mentions no less than 150,000, but after all the sifting to which MSS. have been subjected, whether by the greatest German scholars, or by our own Ellicott, Light-

foot, Westcott, and Wordsworth, it is still as true as in the days when Horne wrote "that these variations in no important degree affect the general credit of the text, consisting almost wholly of errors in transcription, grammatical or verbal differences, putting a word for its equivalent, or transposing words in a sentence, so that the very worst manuscript extant would not pervert one article of our faith, or destroy one moral precept not elsewhere given in the most explicit terms."

What again can be less satisfactory than the explanation of mere coincidence, in a comparison of Gospel History with Old Testament Prophecy? In the one, are described the character and sufferings and work and kingdom of One, to whom certain titles are given, to whose coming certain dates are assigned, and with whom a variety and abundance of events and particulars are associated; in the other, the life and history and subsequent influence and religion of One who appears several centuries afterwards, in some cases a thousand years or more, in whom, with a marvellous minuteness, and an

astonishing accuracy, all those prophetic ideas are so fully realized, that if we had not abundant evidence to the contrary, we might readily believe that the prophecy had been made after the events had happened. No wonder it has been asked, "What beside the Inspiration of the Almighty could have accomplished this? Here the Great Spirit has been, His footprints are visible. It is alone the work of God."

There can scarcely be a stronger proof of the necessity and value of such a record as that which the New Testament contains, than the very number and frequency of the conflicting opinions about Christ which abound among us. If a knowledge of the truth about Jesus rested on anything else than a Divinely given revelation, it would be always shifting and changing with the varying opinions of men, the speculations of philosophy, and the conditions of society. Into the theory of Inspiration it is perfectly unnecessary to enter here; nothing can be simpler or clearer than the remark of Dean Alford in his *Prolegomena* of the Gospels—"The *men were inspired*, the *books* are

the *results of that Inspiration.*" As a revelation in Christ of the will of God, the teachings of New Testament truth are in harmony with the hypothesis. For the subtilty with which they touch the most deeply hidden and the finest springs of human thought and action, for the nice distinctions which they draw between destiny and freewill, between right and wrong, between the natural and spiritual in man, for the manner in which they combine the principles of truth and love, and in the effects of their moral influence upon men and manners, there are no laws so wonderful in their depth, their clearness, their beauty, or their power for the education and welfare of man, as those of the Gospel.

It is the basis of true civilization, it lays hold of broad principles, and deals with men not as races or tribes, but as members of the great human family, it respects personal and private rights, while it regards the public good, it breathes everywhere the spirit of liberty, but also upholds everywhere individual responsibility. It is the true foundation of all freedom, civil, political, or re-

ligious, and is a promoter of learning and science inasmuch as it stimulates thought and inquiry, and is suggestive of so much in the economy of nature, and of man.

And for this record we claim not only the accuracy of history, but the honor of a Divine Revelation. Now as far as man himself reaches, so far is found the necessity for such a revelation, and so far must any record, professing to contain such a revelation, be at least capable of application. The New Testament writings, if of Divine origin, must be suited to mankind as a whole, to all varieties of men, and to all degrees of development, circumstance or age. And this is the case. Uncultured African or civilized European or astute Asiatic or Lap or Malay, the aged with one foot in the grave or the little child, learned or unlettered, rich or poor, all find herein what they need to enlighten and to satisfy the soul, and to guide, support and sanctify in the path of life, and in the passage of death.

Into the fires of criticism, by friend and by foe, has been thrust every part of the record, over and

over again, but we have it still, all the freer from the dross of human admixture, and more widely disseminated and more generally received than ever. No record has been so rudely handled, or has passed through a tithe of the sifting and scrutiny of which this can boast, but the only conclusion that mankind generally from age to age are willing to accept is this, that the writings are the productions of the men to whom they are attributed, that they were written in the age to which they are assigned, that in their transmission to us they have suffered no material corruption, and that as far as any record can be, they are in their contents unquestionably true.

No less true than beautiful is the comparison of the gospel record to some grand old Rock standing out of the sea, unmoved though the waves dash against it, only to be broken into foam, and give place to others, while it lifts up to heaven its undiminished head, and the light of the glorious sun kindles upon it a heavenly radiance.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THE OBJECTION FROM
MYSTERY.

UNDERLYING the doubts and difficulties of many about the Deity of Christ is the mystery in which it is involved, and to some men all that partakes of the supernatural is incredible and all that is mysterious is forbidding. The coarse infidelity of Paine, and the mythological and astronomical theories of Volney have given place to other modes of unbelief equally animated by a dislike for the supernatural. Very few indeed will go so far as to say with Comte, "We thank the idea of God for the service it may have rendered in the past; we politely and respectfully bow it out, it may now be dispensed with," but very many treat Christ as nothing more than a noble example of a great teacher and a virtuous man, and regard the records

which the New Testament contains as the philosophy of so many well-meaning enthusiasts.

Many a sceptical man is however an honest searcher after truth, who is impeded in his progress by the difficulties which he meets. But in what direction, in what department of truth or science, shall we escape them? Are we to reject as impossible all that is mysterious? Do we act upon this principle in the things of daily life? Are the phenomena of nature accounted incredible because they are inexplicable? Are the light of the sun by which we see, or its warmth which we feel, any the less true as facts, because in the sun itself and in its rays there are mysteries, which remain unsolved by a Herschel, a Faraday, or a Tyndal? And if in the works of Creation there are so many undoubted mysteries, which we yet are willing to accept, and even expect,

And trust
With faith, that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved,

is it so very strange if we meet with mystery in the Creator? if in His revelation of Himself in His works, why not in His revelation in Christ?

In his essay, "*De Natura Deorum*," Cicero tells of a certain philosopher, who being interrogated by a king at whose court he was staying, as to what God was, required from his questioner a day's consideration; that day being gone, he requested a second, and so on day after day, until the king desiring to know the reason of his delay, he replied that the more he considered the question, the more difficult it became for him to answer it. His eternal existence—not so much that of the future, for what *is*, we can conceive of as continuing to be, but that of the Past—the beginning of God, here is a mystery. But the same mystery attaches to space, which even in thought you cannot limit, or to time, which is its equivalent. Examine this pinch of sea-dust fished from a depth of thousands of feet below the waves, off the island of Barbadoes; it appears to the naked eye no more than a fine grey powder, but a good object glass will resolve it into "fairy turnery, countless shapes of exquisite perfection and loveliness, spheres and cubes and cylinders and prisms of ivory," all cut so truly and ornamented so richly that the skilful-

lest human work is poor bungling compared to that "heap of broken beauty." Equally beyond us are the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the sea-dust from the bottom of the Atlantic, or the Being of Him who made it.

But in the mystery of Being man and his Maker are one, and even that condition of existence about which so many books have been written, and in the vain efforts to understand or define which so many deadly feuds have arisen, and so many terms have been made the shibboleth of rival factions, is not to be rejected as impossible because it is so incomprehensible. A Trinity in Unity does not need such illustrations as the trefoil, or a pencil of light, or the primary hues of the rainbow. We ourselves, who are none the less real because a mystery to ourselves, are of a threefold nature, as Robert Browning admirably says :—

"Three souls which make up one soul ; first, to wit,
A soul of each and all the bodily parts
Seated therein, which works, and is what *Does* :
And the next soul, which seated in the brain
Useth the first with its collected use,
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth, is what *Knows* :
And the last soul, that uses both the first,
And constituting man's self, is what *Is*,
What Does, what Knows, what Is—*three* souls, *one* Man."

And why, because of the mystery inseparable from it, should the idea of a revelation from God be regarded with incredulity? Why should the Scriptures, whether of the Old or New Testament, be rejected, because they contain many things which are hard to be understood? What is Creation but Revelation? and if one form of Revelation, why not another? and if the one is so full of mystery, is it anything so wonderful that the other should contain it? In fact this very objection of "mystery" may be fairly used as a favorable argument in support of Revelation.

Human life is a mystery, but it is none the less a reality. Its great waves of history, its whirlpools of disaster and vice, the ceaseless foam and wail and murmur of its misery, are all a mystery of sadness, in a world so full of the beautiful, the joyous, the sublime. With its bright skies and fleecy clouds and pleasant sunshine, the umbrageous foliage of trees, and sweet sounds of rustling leaves and singing birds and humming insects and purling streams, the beautiful forms and hues and the delicate perfume of flowers, the world is under

the shadow of a great sadness. Physical and moral weariness, the waste of health, the loss of energy, the bitterness of failure, the dying down of hope, the anguish of bereavement, the helpless grief of loneliness, almost make of human life a valley of tears, bounded by the black mountains of death, in which "every traveller you meet has some secret care wearying his spirit and weighing down his soul." And the mystery of it? It is the mystery of sin, and Providence, and future retribution.

Take an entire novice into a carpet factory, and the noise of the looms, the motion of the shuttles, the seemingly infinite threads, and the intricacy of their movements, present a scene of confusion and mystery. Beautiful and perfect however is the work already wrought, and narrowly watched, the threads, without any apparent connection, are seen to form into their proper places, and begin to explain their own meaning. There is a plan in it all, and the longer that attention is given to the working out of it, the greater the astonishment and admiration that will be elicited. So with human life,

only that the end alone will perfect the pattern, and as a whole and in many of its parts it must remain a mystery to the end.

Is it any wonder that the Christ should furnish a life replete with mystery? Is it so out of harmony with all life? Is the mere mystery that enshrouds the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ, a sufficient reason for rejecting it as unworthy of credence?

Mysterious moreover as is the whole field of truth covered by the Atonement, is there nothing on the side of reason which should incline us to accept the mystery? To the objection, "Why should all this sensation be made about a corrupt race, why not let the whole race die in their sins? what need that the Son of God should die for it? This globe and its occupants would scarcely be missed out of the immense realms of space and from intelligent creation," is there no answer to be derived from the fact that the majesty of law stepping in has clothed man and his disobedience and his future with such importance, that even the sacrifice of the Son of God shall be necessary for his Redemption?

To the objection "We wonder that the Deity should require the blood of the innocent. How can the blood of Christ profit the Almighty? This shedding of blood is very abhorrent to our feelings," is there not as much sense as piety in the reply, "To us also there is much of mystery in it, though the blood is the life, and our forfeited life is thus typified: we cannot fathom the mystery, but it is the appointed way of salvation of our God, and therefore we accept it"? If the writings of the New Testament speak the truth, if Christ be indeed God, we are face to face with both the doctrine and the possibility of the Atonement, and to reject it because of the mystery attaching to it, is inconsistent with our ordinary method of dealing with the phenomena of nature and of human experience.

That the existence and life and death of Christ as God are full of mystery we cannot deny, but this we maintain is insufficient, in the face of the evidences we possess, as a reason for rejecting His Deity. It is on the other hand of all things the most unreasonable to suppose that, in such a reve-

lation from Heaven as the Gospels record, in such a manifestation as that which is afforded in God made incarnate, there should not necessarily occur from first to last much that is full of mystery. It would all be far more unaccountable and mysterious, but for the only hypothesis upon which we can understand Christ, and which we believe to be established by indisputable arguments—viz., that He was indeed God.



CHAPTER XVII.

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.



THE arguments by which the Deity of Christ is supported in these pages, it will be observed, are not derived directly from the writings, nor urged by the use of texts of Scripture, but are drawn from the idea of Christ as the last link in the creation Godward, and the perfect development of all type and prophecy and human hope, and from a general consideration of the character, teaching and miracles of Christ and the bearing of all these upon His life, from His adaptation to the moral and spiritual needs of men, His marvellous influence over their minds and hearts, and His kingdom in the world to-day; and all this based upon the utter unaccountableness of Christ on any other hypothesis than that of His Deity.

The objections springing out of the Incarnation,

the lowly Human life, and the ignominy of the death, together with the mysteries which they present, are also briefly combated; and some of the phases of modern religious unbelief, as well as the validity of New Testament records, are touched upon. The closing chapter aims at enforcing the arguments adduced.


Here is a mass of evidence of the most varied kind, such as cannot fairly be rejected, and yet can only be accounted for by the Deity of Jesus. Did ever any biographer produce a character that was perfect? Did ever any historian picture a faultless hero? but here in the picture of Jesus, in the character which His biographers have described, there is neither fault nor imperfection. What are the discrepancies, the verbal errors, the inaccurate numbers and so forth, of which so much is made, what are they all compared with this "miraculous conception" of four distinct writers? How came these four men, men of obscure origin and humble life, to accomplish concerning one man what all the world has signally failed in doing? If the charges of discrepancy are pressed, then, admitting them,

it is evident at least that between these writers there was no collusion, and the mystery of the historical Christ only becomes greater. Admit the history however you must, and there faces you in it the portraiture of one whose lineaments are Divine.

A kingdom exists in the world, which on human ground alone is an inexplicable mystery. Speculations and explanations indeed there are, as varied as such men as Hegel, Strauss, Martineau, Renan, Atkinson, Lecky and others would be likely to make them. But the fact of this kingdom cannot be explained away, and still it takes deeper root and gathers strength, and commands wider attention. There have been great conquerors in the world who have founded dynasties, and left behind them great kingdoms, but their empire and influence have alike passed away. And one of the most marvellous of these, who was no less a philosopher than a warrior, has borne striking testimony to the real secret of force and vitality by which the kingdom of Christ is maintained. "The triumph of love," he says "is, without

dispute, the greatest of the miracles of Christ. He and He only has succeeded in raising the heart of man above visible things, even to the sacrifice of time. All who sincerely believe in Him experience this admirable, supernatural, all-powerful love, which is an inexplicable phenomenon, and cannot be attained by the reason and strength of man ; it is a sacred fire which has been given to earth by this new Prometheus, of which time can neither waste the strength nor limit the duration. I, Napoleon, admire this fact more than any other, because I have often reflected upon it, and it affords me complete proof of the Divinity of Christ."

Here is a religion in existence, bearing the name of Christ, and founded on His teaching, His example, and still more upon His death, not, like other religions of the world, a religious *system* of ethics or ideas of truth, but a religion which springs out of, is inseparably associated with, and centres round *a person*. For eighteen hundred years this Christianity has been a great fact in the world. Communities of men and women have



through all these centuries been perpetuating His continual memorial. Convents and churches and cathedrals have been reared in all lands, with immense toil and cost, that there His worship might be continued, and the flames of affection for Him might be fanned. Men of learning and piety have devoted the best portion of their life to speak or to write of His person, His kingdom, or His work. The noblest and wealthiest have abandoned all that men most prize, to devote themselves to His service. Let the world's experience of Christ bear testimony. Wherever it has embraced Him, it has found in Him illumining light, profound peace, infinite refreshment. And all this is true, not of a system, not of abstract truth, not of Christianity the religion, but of one real, historical, adorable *Person*, apart from whom the system, the truths, the religion, would all be incomplete.

To account for this can we deem any mere man sufficient? Were it only logical, we might feel tempted to adopt the argument of Hume, that it is "contrary to human experience." Now it is just against this only solution of all the difficulty and

mystery which beset the truth seeker, that an age of invention is ever directing its new schemes of infidelity. The Divinity of Jesus is the foundation whereon rests the whole stronghold of Christianity, and but that it were resting upon this Eternal Rock, it would long since have fallen, and been carried away and buried in the sea of infidelity, but against this Rock the murderous missiles of an infidel generation shall be vainly projected.

To take away His Deity from Christ is to take from Him that Power of Life by which He maintains, and which alone can account for, His kingdom in the world to-day; it is to take from Him the Power of Atonement, and so deprive Him of that influence, which by His death He exercises over mankind. A mere man, Christ could never have been to the world what He is, and all that He has been and is to the world is one of the most convincing proofs of His Deity. Remove the light, and soon all the activities of life would cease; the business and the toil and the traffic, the plough and the loom and the chisel, be laid aside; amazement yield to fear, and fear to settled gloom. Put

out the Sun, and in forty-eight hours, we are told, the atmosphere would be condensed and fall in fine snow-like particles, feet thick, upon the ground, vegetation would be withered, and all animal life would perish. Remove Christ, and you take away from science its brightest ornaments, its grandest discoveries; the arts languish; literature becomes mutilated. The glory of musicians and sculptors and artists, of historians poets and Divines, is borrowed from the light of Christ. Take Him away, and away go all our hallowed Institutions, Hospitals, Infirmarys, Orphanages, Asylums for the aged and the poor, the sacredness of the family circle, the honored position of woman, the rights and liberties of man. Men walk in the light of social and moral light, and *forget that Jesus is the Sun*, whose light and heat are penetrating to the furthest corners of the earth, and whose withdrawal would be the signal for social and moral death.

As greatness can always estimate greatness and goodness appreciate goodness, so, the greater and better men are, the more ready are they to admire

and appreciate the great and the good in Christ. Men of high moral culture are attracted by the perfection of Christ's character, and the loftiness of His teaching ; the generous and unselfish are won by the disinterestedness of His life, and the noble self-sacrifice which He made ; and, to the pitiful and tender-hearted, among all the martyrdoms of the good and great, there is no memory so fragrant, and no name so illustrious, and no death so precious as that of Christ. And yet, with all this admiration and appreciation of Christ, there may be no association of Him personally with the individual life, no consecration to Him of the heart.

If we believe in the Deity of Christ, if we accept the Atonement of the Cross, we cannot consistently remain satisfied with what is only historical or general. If the conscience and the life are not touched, we are yet without one of the most convincing evidences. The Son of God dying for the salvation of the souls of men is often regarded as a beautiful theory, until Christianity is pressed home as a personal reality, affecting the heart and

life; and then it becomes quite another thing, then men forget all about the power and glory of Christ, lose sight of the very evidences which satisfied them, and drift into hopeless indifference for the want of personal experience.

A mere intellectual appreciation of even the Deity and Atoning work of Christ falls short of man's need. The heart also craves satisfaction, and only Christ taken into the heart can yield it. To many a life there comes a shock, which scatters everything, and leaves only a dreary waste and a blank; "There are hours" says Robertson, of Brighton, "when the sense of misplaced affection, or of ill-requited affection, when the feeling of personal unworthiness, the uncertainty of human aims, and other things, unfix the soul from its moorings, and send it drifting with an awful sense of solitariness." At such a time, and it may come to every man, it is Christ in the soul that is needed, and then it is, by His power to direct and sustain, that men possess in their own experience the proof of His Deity.

It is to this evidence derived from experience

that in conclusion the reader of this little volume is earnestly directed. Let a man find Christ liberating him from the slavery of his appetites and passions, raising his mind above the mere accidents of human life, filling his soul with a calm and serene peace, and his heart with purity; that man has in himself an evidence of His reality, and a proof of His power, which no argument can assail, and which needs no argument to establish it. Men may call this enthusiasm or fancy; but honesty and truth, reformation of character and holiness of life, fearing God and doing right, sobriety, modesty, and brotherly love, these things are neither enthusiasm nor fancy.

Once feel the power of Christ on your own heart, find in Him the answer to all the inquiries and the satisfaction of all the yearnings of your soul, realize in Him the true Fatherhood of God and the forgiveness of sin, and experience in Him the settled peace of a new and holy life; then men will talk to you in vain about the discrepancies of the records, the variations of manuscripts, the errors of dates and names, or the seeming con-

tradition of Scripture with science or history or anything else; you will smile at all arguments, you will not be moved by the mention of mystery, for you will have the most convincing of all arguments in your own experience of the personal power and preciousness of Christ Himself, and will say, "By this, if by nothing else, I am assured that Jesus is indeed God."



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